

**DEVELOPING STEWARDS OF THE FAITH TO EMPOWER
THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH THROUGH
A MODEL OF DISCIPLESHIP**

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose for this project was to develop, implement, and evaluate a process of developing stewards of the faith through discipleship at the New Saint Thomas Baptist Church of Portsmouth, Virginia. A focal group was introduced to principles of discipleship and the interrelated aspects of stewardship through four consecutive weeks of Bible studies and sermons designed to increase awareness of the source, the power, the purpose, and the results of discipleship. As a result of a pre- and post-survey and participant observations, an increased awareness of the necessity of discipleship in becoming good stewards of the faith was accomplished.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project has been made possible by a number of persons who contributed their time, patience, understanding, and talents toward the accomplishment of this project in support of this researcher.

I would first like to thank my wife, Anna, for her encouragement and continual prayer on my behalf. This endeavor would not have become a reality had it not been for her challenging and inspiring prophetic insights into the Will of God in relationship to our ministry.

I am also grateful for my sons, David, Jonathan, and Paul who were always available for whatever aid or assistance that was needed, especially in the form of computer literacy.

The staff, context associates and the New St. Thomas Baptist Church family has continued to be a blessing to me. I would especially like to thank the Intercessory Fellowship (IF) prayer warriors for just being faithful in their commitment and prayers.

I would also like to thank Drs. Curtis E. Edmonds Sr., Clifford D. Barnett, and Devlaming A. Peace for serving as my professional associates and consultants to this project. In spite of their vigorous and challenging schedule, they found time to consult and share their vast, rich experiences and expertise with this grateful student.

Finally, I would like to thank United Theological Seminary for extending the opportunity for growth and development in this complex and trying time. The wealth of knowledge and exposure to different ministries throughout this country as well as the resources that profoundly impacted me was afforded by my mentors par excellent, Dr.

Ricky Woods and Dr. Terry Thomas. Words cannot express my gratitude to these awesome men of God. Thank You.

DEDICATION

To Anna, my wife of 32 years.

To my father, Freddie L. Drake Sr., born March 27, 1917, died July 17, 2002.

INTRODUCTION

This project was originally designed to encourage and help the church to become more effective in their outreach ministry in the local community through evangelism. This author, however, through the preparatory process of looking at the context of ministry in relationship to the community and the mandates of the Supreme and Eternal God whom we serve, was inspired to focus on personal relationships as a launching pad for evangelistic outreach. The author believes that the development of this personal relationship can be enhanced by helping the congregants to increase their awareness of the purpose of discipleship and their responsibilities as stewards of the faith. This awareness could be a catalyst to empower them to be a light in this dark and dreary world and a blessing to the community around them. The catalyst for the thrust of this project stems from the writer's belief that evangelism should be more than a project. It should be a lifestyle that mirrors or reflects the life of the one in whom we trust, namely our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This assessment led to the determination that a project was needed to focus on the whole person in a holistic ministry wherein the mind, body, and spirit can be ministered. Hence, the purpose of this project is to develop, implement, and evaluate a process of discipleship development at the New St. Thomas Baptist Church.

The researcher's aim was not to develop evangelists just for the opportunity to increase the membership of the local assembly but to develop individuals who would reflect the Will of the Master, or the desires of the head of households, by being faithful in the things that he has entrusted us, His faithful stewards, to do. This process of becoming good stewards can only be accomplished through the process of discipleship

wherein we learn the desires and plans of the Master and then walk in his will and his way. In other words, the church needs to be equipped to follow the mandate of God found in Matthew 28:18-20:

Then Jesus came to them and said, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you: and surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

The research found and applied in this project will hopefully allow the reader to discover that the church has a mandate to follow in the footsteps of Jesus who came to do the will of the Father. The Father's will was delineated in the Garden through the first command of God to man when he said: "Be fruitful and multiply and have dominion." Jesus reiterated the command in Mathew to "go and make disciples". Therefore, it is the hope of this author that the research provided will show the importance of discipleship and that the Bible studies and sermons will provide a Biblical foundation to guide and equip the saints of God to be the disciples that God has intended for us, His sons and daughters, to be.

Chapter One of the document will provide the ministry focus. It will specifically describe the project and why the project was selected. It will also explain how the researcher's life journey led him to focus on this area of spiritual growth. This chapter will also address how this project will contribute to the ministry and to this religious academy of higher education.

Chapter Two, the state of the art in ministry, will provide the background information and the literature that helped to formulate the foundational principles that undergird the substance of the project. The literature in this section is by no means all of

the literature used for this project, but it provides the most insights in the development of this project.

Chapter Three focuses on the theoretical foundations that were expressed in the historical, the Biblical and the theological foundations. It addresses the school of thought that formulated the principles applied in this project.

Chapter Four discusses the methodology used by this author to collect, evaluate and measure the data that distinguishes the effectiveness of the project. It will also discuss the development and make-up of the focal group used for this work and the tools used to extend the ideas and concepts of this concept to them.

Chapter Five presents the field research and allows the writer to engage the data, exploring its relevance by interpreting what the data means and implies with regards to the successful application of the resources to arrive at the intended purpose of the project. It will show that the desired results were achieved as well as point out some of the limitations of the project.

Chapter Six, the final chapter, contains the reflections of the writer as to his field experience and the assumptions and the conditions that affected the project during the preparation and implementation phases.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

The context for ministry for this pastor's local assembly, The New St. Thomas Baptist Church, shows that the congregants or people of the context who, in their heart, want to be a blessing to the community, but are somehow missing the mark or goal of missionary work. This trouble may stem from the congregation's misunderstanding of what the word "blessing" truly means. The congregation, for the most part, believes that we can bless our community by merely meeting the physical needs of the underprivileged, such as those community members who find themselves hungry, unable to clothe themselves or their families, or unable to pay the bills for shelter that they so desperately need. Although it is good to do unto others as we would have them do unto us, the problem is that many seem to miss the true essence of holistic ministry as they provide quick fixes for much deeper problems. Thus, we have not found or addressed the root of the problem. We have only helped the victims of a ravaged life to continue in poverty, to continue in the uselessness that aids or empowers the devil to do his job, namely, "to steal and to kill and to destroy" (John 10:10a). We must, therefore, present a model that will offer this community in distress, a way of realizing the expectations of Christ revealed in his statement to the Pharisees in John 10:10b which states: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." In other words, we have not been commissioned, in the name of Jesus, just to supply needs or just to supply physical life, but we've been commissioned to show people how to receive the abundant life that Christ offers.

By reviewing his spiritual autobiography, this author has found that God has been showing him that no matter what kind of people are calling on His name—American or Korean, black or white—that “God is no respecter of persons”.¹ He is faithful to his Word, and he will supply us with what we need to live that abundant life of which he speaks. No matter what denomination, whether Church of Christ, Episcopal, Baptist, or Non-Denominational, God responds to the heart and not to rituals. There is a mandate which comes directly from the throne room of God and is expressed in Matthew 28:19-20:

Go ye therefore and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

How do we teach them to observe? In this author’s spiritual autobiography, the Lord impressed on his heart the phrase “back to basics” as a focus for his spiritual journey. In order to get back to basics, the saints on the inside of the church, must have their minds renewed. The author suggests that he, through the power of the Holy Spirit, can accomplish this by preaching a series of sermons basic to the theology of liberation and fundamental to the Biblical principles that will excite in them the spirit of evangelism. This will allow them to reflect on how good God has been to them, which is the good news on a personal level, by helping them to realize that there is a plan and a purpose in their lives designed by God and assigned by God to bring glory to his name. The goal of this model is to reveal to the leaders and laity of the church, through a variety of preaching and teaching series, how to integrate the programs that we have in place to

¹Acts 10:24 (King James Version).

meet the community's physical needs (such as feeding and clothing) into a holistic ministry that will address not only those who come to us for help but also those in the community who may not know or be willing to come to us. These sermons and teaching series will be centered on the revelation of who they are in Christ Jesus and how that relationship has changed or made a difference in their lives. Hopefully, it will inspire them to go outside the walls of the church with the message they received from the inside of the church, in a way that will affect the lives of men and women in our community by feeling empowered by the power of the Word and the Love of Christ. The focus of this author's project will be to develop an evangelistic model through a holistic approach of ministry invigorated by preaching and leadership to reach the surrounding community in which we live.

This author's aim was not to invent a new paradigm for the church but to reveal and establish the original mandate of God as revealed not only in the Great Commission of Matthew 28 but woven throughout the Old and New Testament. This project attempts to focus on the mandate of Christ to develop disciples, people of God who will become stewards of the faith, through a series of in-depth Bible studies interwoven with directed Biblical preaching to cause congregants to realize the importance and benefits of becoming disciples of Christ.

Context of Ministry

The context of ministry for this author is the New St. Thomas Baptist Church located in the inner city of Portsmouth, Virginia. Portsmouth is a small city nestled in the Tidewater area of southeastern Virginia. Other cities in close proximity to Portsmouth

include Chesapeake, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach on the south side of the James River, and Hampton and Newport News on the north side. The 2003 population estimates for Portsmouth was 99,617 which was a 0.9 decrease from the previous estimate. Some 13 years earlier in 1990, the census showed a population of 103,907. This indicates that Portsmouth over the past decade has been steadily declining in population.

The 2000 census gives the following race and ethnic statistics: Afro-Americans make up 50.6% of the population, while Caucasians make up 45.8%, persons of Hispanics or Latino origin 1.7%, and Asians 0.8%. It also states that 4.6% of the population in Portsmouth, five-years-old and above, speak a language other than English, and 1.6% were foreign born.

The statistics, taken in 2000, show that 75.2% of the population of Portsmouth, twenty-five years and older, had a high school diploma, but only 13.8% of the same age bracket had a bachelor's degree or higher. The median income of Portsmouth households in 1999 was \$33,742 which was about \$13,000 less than the median income for the state of Virginia, which was \$46,677 for the same period. Approximately 16.2% of the local population was below the poverty level, while the average for the state was only 9.6%.

The major employer in Portsmouth is the historic Norfolk Naval Shipyard. It employs approximately 8,000 people. Other large employers are the City of Portsmouth, Beltline Railroad, Gwaltney Meat Packing Plant, and the Portsmouth Naval Hospital.

The New St. Thomas Baptist Church is a microcosm of the city in which it is located. Many of the trends, ranging from the decline in membership to the level of income per family unit are found in this local assembly. The church is an inner city church in a predominately black neighborhood which is approximately 8-10 blocks away

from the Norfolk Naval Shipyard. The community is located in a historic district, but many of the homes are old and dilapidated. Many more have been abandoned and act as magnets to the drug addicts and dope pushers. There is a push underway to revitalize the neighborhood by renovating old homes or tearing down and building new homes. New St. Thomas is involved in the reconstruction effort as well. We have decided to not only reclaim our real estate but to also reclaim the state of lives of the real people who live here. We are in the process of rebuilding dilapidated lives and restoring seemingly wasted lives back into a right relationship with the Lord.

New St. Thomas was founded some 102 years ago when a few members of the First Baptist Church South Portsmouth decided to start a new church in the city. During the course of those years from 1904 to the present, the church has been led by a total of 16 pastors: Rev. T. W. Thompson, Rev. W. H. Tillery, Rev. H. A. Brinkley, Rev. M. L. Dawson, Rev. I. S. Arnold, Rev. J. E. Tynes, Rev. J. E. Mack, Rev. S. L. Scott, Rev. J. A. Everette, Rev. E. E. Morgan, Rev. J. M. Owens, Rev. C. W. Cuffee, Rev. C. M. Heidelberg, Rev. A. G. Graves, Rev. T. E. Myrick, and Rev. J. J. Drake (the present pastor). The church has a membership of approximately 100 members and two associate ministers.

The church has been involved in various community-related outreach programs, including a food feeding ministry geared at feeding the hungry and homeless, providing clothing for the needy and homeless in our area, and various other need-driven activities. This author has found, however, that merely supplying the needs of the physical body is just a temporary fix for a continuing problem. The saints, in our context of ministry, need to change their focus and concentrate on a more holistic ministry, where the needs of the

whole man—mind, body, and spirit—are addressed. The congregants need a ministry modeled after the transformative work of Jesus, a ministry that in the process of filling a belly or putting clothes on people's back, will also invigorate the mindset of the community by the power of a living Savior. The context ministers and congregation need to be transformed in their approach to their ministry of helps.

The past history of the church suggests that the context members were satisfied with the established or present members of the church. Therefore, all activities and functions were centered on the central worship service and the activities that enhanced the lives of those that were a part of that assembly. No effort or emphasis was placed on presenting Christ to the community at-large. If someone from the community presented their problems to the church, the church would gladly respond, but how can we equip and prepare the church to come out of their comfort zone and go into the fields where the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few?

There are some barriers that need to be addressed in order to be the evangelistic and liberating church that God has ordained us to be. Evangelism invokes the proclamation or presentation of the gospel or good news to individuals or groups by preaching and teaching as well as personal family or individual visitation programs. The goal of our church is to prepare church members to become effective evangelists in their community through the study of the Word, in an effort to overcome the barriers that hinder them from stepping out in faith in accordance with God's Word. At the present time, only a few members attend Bible study. Our effort now is to encourage Bible study through directive preaching, concentrating on the need for Bible study as a tool for the effective practice of our faith of which evangelism is a major part.

Spiritual Autobiography

This author believes that the desire to walk in fellowship with the Lord by embracing discipleship is engrained in every believer. It is present even before we are formed in our mother's womb. God is a proactive God. He is always reaching out to us in the midst of our life journey, trying to catch our attention, wanting to re-establish a relationship with him. Our story is really His story of seeking the lost by drawing us to him. This author's story is an example of His love.

The author's father migrated to Portsmouth from Meridian, Georgia in 1941 with his native-born Beaufort, South Carolina mother, their daughter and son. His father sought war-time work at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard as an electrician. This employment was not only the source of their family's livelihood but ultimately was the cause of his father's death. The author's father died in 2002 from Mesothelioma.

While living in Portsmouth, the author's parents had three more children, including him. The family moved from the triplex apartments that were built for shipyard workers in Douglass Park into a newly built, two-bedroom home in North Truxton that was also built for black shipyard workers. This house would be their home for the remainder of this author's childhood, and his mother still lives there today.

The author's mother was, and still is, a very spiritual woman. One of her first tasks in Portsmouth was to find a home church. The very first church she visited was St. Thomas Baptist Church, and even though she did not select it as her home church, it would become the very church that the author would pastor many years later. The Lord led her to unite with St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church, which was in walking distance from their home in Truxton. The children were required to go to church and Sunday

school with their mother, and even though their father did not attend church, he was adamant about his children attending every service. The siblings understood as children that if they did not go to church, even if it was a seemingly good excuse, they would not be going anywhere or have any visitors for the rest of the day.

The author's father was a heavy weekend drinker, but there was something on the inside of his father that caused him to remember his church experience from his youth. Many times on Sunday night when his father was feeling good from the strong drink, he would gather the children and have choir rehearsal in their home. When the author's father felt like the children sounded good enough, he would carry the children from neighbor to neighbor, and they would sing some of his favorite spirituals until he got tired. Even though the children resisted and complained about singing from house to house, they really enjoyed the singing, and sometimes even today they gather together to just sing and rejoice in the Lord. The author's mother always prayed for his father's salvation, but to the children, it almost seemed hopeless.

The author's years at St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church were wonderful years, and the family looked forward to attending Sunday school and church. It was more than just a service; it was an event. All of the siblings' friends were there, and they felt important to the teachers and the officers of the church. The author was growing in his knowledge of the Word and growing in his desire to know the Lord.

When the author turned twelve years old, he was required, along with other children at the age of understanding, to sit on the so-called the mourner's bench which was located before the deaconess at the front of the church. When the invitation was given, the deaconess would nudge and encourage the children to give their hearts to the

Lord. One Sunday, the author was led to give up and give in to the Lord. It was a wonderful feeling, and soon afterwards the author was baptized in the pool that was beneath the pulpit. Now the author could really join his mother in prayer for his father.

One day the author's father made a profound announcement to his mother. He wanted to start attending church, but he did not want to go to a Baptist church because he thought the services were too long. He wanted to attend a service like the one he attended in the military. He selected St. James Episcopal Church and began to attend on a regular basis. The author's two younger sisters and he decided that they would follow his father in order to encourage him to stay in church.

The author was very involved in Sunday school and the worship services at St. James and was eventually selected to become an acolyte. He served with the rector of the church and was trained by the head acolyte. The head acolyte, now a rector in the Episcopal Church, was the student leader for the sit-in strikes in Portsmouth during the late 50's. The author did not participate in the sit-ins because he broke his leg during football season prior to the sit-ins. It was for the author, however, a time of deep reflection, and he found himself putting his thoughts on paper ("This Tormented World", unpublished, 1960) as racial tension began to explode in every area of their lives.

Oh, this tormented world of ours
With its sorrow and its strife
With its pain and its frustration
Should summon us to life

We're now a divided nation
Racial tension in the air
It is undesirable tension
But you can see it everywhere

You can see it in the city
Rural areas as well

And if it's not stamped out
It'll create a living hell

Every thought of prolonged hatred
Should be stamped from every mind
So, listen carefully friend
I'll tell you how it's done

There's a famous proclamation
Drawn up on ancient charts
It has the information
That should open up your hearts

It gives an illustrative picture
Of life, of love, of faith
You'll profit by its teachings
You'll destroy this thing called hate

Yes this tormented world of ours
With its sorrow and its strife
Has summoned me to thinking
Let it summons us to life.

When the head acolyte left for college, the author became the head acolyte and served in both Portsmouth and Suffolk.

Although the author was actively involved in the church and had accepted the Lord (being baptized early in his life), he still had one foot in the church and one foot in the world. There was still a war raging inside of him.

After graduating from I. C. Norcom High School, the author enlisted in the U. S. Air Force. Being away from home, he found himself slipping away from the values that he had learned at home and began following the route of the prodigal son. After serving tours in San Antonio, Texas; Idaho; Thailand; Spain; Lubbock, Texas; and then Thailand again, he found himself at Langley A.F.B. in Virginia. This author was home again, but he was not the same boy who had left so many years earlier. He drank and lived a life void of the Lord.

One day after his mother's day-in and day-out prodding about going to Bible study, the author gave in and accompanied her to the study. The study turned out to be a revival, and the focus was on the seven seals of Revelations. God is an awesome God, and He knows just what to put in your life when you are in need of a special touch from Him. Although the author was living a lifestyle apart from God and full of the things of the world, he was caught up in the writings of Hal Lindsey. Lindsey's book, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, stirred in this author a desire to learn more about the end times. It seemed as if the words of the revivalist were an answer to the many questions the author had in his spirit.

The author became so caught up in the Word that he was ready even before his mother asked. On that night when the invitation was given, he accepted the Lord. Although he had accepted the Lord at age twelve, the author did not know if he had done so because he wanted to or because he was expected to. On this night, he knew it was his election for sure. His life changed drastically after that night. He attended church and Sunday school when home and Bible studies on the base during his lunch hours.

In 1976, the author was transferred to Osan A.F.B in South Korea. For some thirty years, the Lord had not allowed him to find anyone to share in his misery, but now that he had the joy of the Lord in his life, the Lord led him to his future wife. The author and his bride-to-be attended Korean church services together and sat on the front row so the writer could use the head phones to hear the sermons in English. The author married in 1977 and returned to George A.F.B. The author's wife had a hard time adjusting to life in America, but the Lord put a Korean lady in their path, who introduced them to a Bible study for Oriental wives. The leader of the Bible study was an American man who was

married to a Japanese woman. The Bible study, in its conception, was a miracle in itself of God's love.

Korean people, for the most part, do not like Japanese people and very seldom interact on a social level because of memories of the Japanese occupation of Korea during the years prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor. God, however, had established a friendship between a Korean lady and a Japanese lady; both were Christians. There was another Korean lady, a devout Buddhist, who was critically ill in the base hospital. The doctors had tested and tried everything, but they had no idea what the problem was and could offer no help or hope for recovery. The Christian Korean lady, while visiting this lady told her about her Japanese friend's husband who believed in God's healing power. She asked the ailing Buddhist if he could come and pray for her. The ailing woman responded that she felt she had nothing to lose because Buddha had not come to her rescue. The Japanese woman's husband came and laid hands on this dying Buddhist woman. God stood up in him and through prayer she was healed. Not only was she healed, but she accepted Jesus as her Lord and Savior.

As a new creation in Christ Jesus, this one time Buddhist decided that everyone should know about this God who had blessed her, even when she did not deserve to be blessed. She began to go from room to room, telling everyone that Jesus was real and had delivered her from sickness and death. After she was released from the hospital, she continued to witness, especially to Oriental women with Buddhist backgrounds. Soon she solicited the Japanese woman's husband to start a Bible study for Oriental wives.

The author and his wife began to attend those Bible studies, and they saw how the Lord was revealing himself to women who had only known idolatry and ritualism. These

studies led them to truly see and know that God was indeed “no respecter of persons”.²

These women were on fire for the Lord. They believed in repentance. They would go to a young convert’s house, gather every idol—necklace, book, every representation of the old idol worshiping lifestyle—and burn them in the backyard. It was a blessing for this author’s wife to have friendships with women from her native country with whom she could share. The author was soon assisting the other brother with Bible studies, and the two men taught and witnessed to Oriental wives at George and Edwards Air Force bases.

Many of the new converts wanted to follow Christ in baptism. That presented a problem because the base chapel did not have a baptismal pool. There was, however, a chaplain that had a metal coffin case that was normally used to transport deceased soldiers from overseas to various state locations. The women, including the author’s wife, gathered together on a Saturday evening in the courtyard of the chapel. The coffin was filled with water, and one by one in the midst of the singing “Take Me To The Water”, they sat in the water-filled coffin, were gently laid back, and submerged in that watery grave by the chaplain. Oh, what a picture of the death, burial and resurrection of the believer in Christ. Halleluiah!

The author was also attending chapel services on the base, and because of his relationship with the Oriental Bible study, he and his wife were asked to become on-call marriage counselors for American and Oriental couples who were having serious relationship problems. The author’s first son was born at George A.F.B., and they knew the Lord was truly blessing them.

²Acts 10:24 (King James Version).

The author and his family returned to Korea in 1981 and had the privilege of working with the chaplains there to establish an orientation program for Korean and American couples. The program addressed the need for a relationship with the Lord and the culture shock of transitioning from Korean to American culture in the United States.

This tour was a little difficult for them because his wife was pregnant with their second son. They lived in Kunsan, Korea, and there were no medical facilities, except for a clinic that could not deliver babies. They would have to drive one hour from Kunsan to Jonju to reach the closest hospital. On November 12, 1982 at approximately 3 A.M., the author's wife went into labor. Gathering his wife, his son, and his wife's aunt, he loaded their car (a Hyundai Pony) for the trip. Still half asleep, the author's son sat on the front seat with his father. The author was negotiating a turn as they were leaving Kunsan City, but in the midst of the turn, the car hit a dip in the road, sending it airborne. The car, even though the writer was turning the wheel with all of his might, kept going straight. He found that steering wheels do not work when the wheels are not on the ground.

This event should remind all of us that if one is not grounded in the Lord, we cannot steer our lives in the right direction.

The car and its inhabitants crashed through a railing, and the windshield shattered. The author wants you to know that when the windshield broke, no glass touched them. It was as if there was an invisible shield, protecting them. The Lord did say He would be our shield and buckler. The author did not have time to prepare a dissertation or a profound prayer to invoke the saving power of the Lord. He could not do anything but shout "Jesus!" The Lord has said in his Word: "I'll be a very present help in a time of

trouble.”³ Behind the rail was a cliff. The car plunged down, down, down to the railroad tracks below. When the car crashed on the tracks, the car was demolished, but no one even fell off the seat. No one had even one scratch. Many people from the nearby homes came out to see what had happened and began shouting and waving their arms. The author could not understand what they were saying so he asked his wife what was going on. She said a train was coming soon. The men began moving the car, front-end first and then the back. They walked the car about twenty-five yards to a clearing where they could get it off the tracks. Oh, praise God for small men with strong backs.

His wife was still in labor, and they were still forty-five minutes from the hospital with no transportation. But on that lonely road at 3:30 A.M., a taxi going back to Kunsan came by. He stopped, heard our story, and promised to come back. He carried his fare to their destination and returned to take the author and his family to the hospital. During all of this time, God was holding the writer’s wife (whose water broke before they left home) in the palm of his hand. The Bible says, “by Him, all things consist.”⁴ He held the baby back until they got to the hospital where she delivered their second son. God was revealing His power to them. By the way, the name of the hospital was the JonJu—the Jesus Hospital.

The author and his family returned to California where their third son was born. Shortly after his birth, the family returned to Korea. It was a wonderful year. The author and his wife were initially married in the U. S. Embassy in Korea so they renewed their

³Psalms 46:1 (King James Version).

⁴Colossians 1:17 (King James Version).

vows in a formal marriage ceremony in the base chapel. God, however, was still tugging at the author's heart.

The author received orders to go to Georgia, and because he was close to retirement he was pleased. He wanted to be close to home so he could prepare for retirement. It was about two weeks before they were ready to leave that he received news that they had been diverted to North Dakota. This upset the author tremendously. Why would they do that to him? Why would they send him so far from home? But in the midst of his ranting and raving, the Lord spoke to him and simply said: "Who's in charge?" The author immediately went to the chapel where he attended mid-week noon day service. He shared with his fellow Christians how he had been upset but now was ready to go where the Lord wanted him to go and to do what the Lord wanted him to do.

It was at the North Dakota base that this author began to worship in a non-denominational gospel service. This began to prepare him for what the Lord had in store for him. He felt like God had sent him to the wilderness to gather his thoughts and to focus his attention on Him and His plan for his life. This writer was ordained as a deacon and began to sing with three other preachers and a deacon. They called themselves the Gospel Silver Tones. They sang all over the western part of North Dakota and the eastern part of Minnesota and witnessed about the goodness of the Lord to anyone, anywhere that they could. It was in North Dakota that the author responded to the call to the ministry.

This author was licensed to preach under the Gospel Inspirational Fellowship on June 9, 1987 and was ordained by The Arc of Safety for All Nations on August 9, 1987. He continued to sing and preach throughout the area until he retired in 1988.

After retiring from the military, the author returned to Portsmouth, Virginia and was led to return to St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church where the church accepted his certificate of license and certificate of ordination. He began to assist the pastor as an associate minister. The pastor encouraged him to change his license to a Baptist license and licensed the author on January 11, 1991. After he retired, a young and gifted minister became pastor in March 1992. This new pastor was the best thing that could have happened to St. Mark. This author was blessed to sit under his ministry and was soon honored to become the assistant to the pastor. The author taught Sunday school and Bible study, and led the evangelistic outreach team that ministered in the Lincoln Park housing project located near the church. This was a very spiritually profitable time in this author's life.

The author was selected as the pastor-elect of the New St. Thomas Baptist Church and was ordained on June 15, 1995 under the ordaining council convened by the pastor of the St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church. On June 25, 1995, he was installed as pastor of New St. Thomas Baptist Church, and in that the same year he also entered Virginia Union School of Theology.

Every aspect of the events the author herein mentioned has helped to shape and mold his ethics for the pastoral ministry to which the Lord has called him to minister. When the author looks back on his life, he can see the Lord molding and shaping him through the victories and the defeats. The Lord was letting him know that what He has started in him, He is able to complete in spite of the barriers, hard times and hindrances that this author might encounter along the way.

When the author was called into the ministry, he was blessed with one phrase in his spirit that has always stayed with him as he transitioned from place to place: “back to basics”. The vision of ministry is geared towards a church that ministers to a multi-cultural people within a Black community base. The purpose of the ministry is to reach out to the community with the invigorating power of the Word of God to uplift souls from degradation, bring souls out through liberation, and empower them through the activation of faith and faith-based programs for those families in the community who find themselves trapped and oppressed by a non-user-friendly society. The thrust of the ministry is geared towards the restoration of waning spiritual relationships, the invigoration of dormant spiritual motivation, and the activation of renewed spiritual involvement. The author calls it an “inside-out, back-to-basics” type of ministry committed to inspiring the inside of the church, or the saints of God with the Word of God, to leave the confines of the church, go outside, and actively and aggressively get involved in the community in which they live.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY MODEL

In this chapter, this researcher will examine and provide an overview of the literature that provided insight and directional ideas that helped to formulate the concept of discipleship and stewardship as reflected in this project. This review of literature covers a broad spectrum of historical, theological, and Biblical authors and editors who helped this writer establish some of the theological thought and the ramifications of those thoughts on the theological foundations upon which this dissertation is established.

The authors and editors listed below seem keenly aware and knowledgeable of the significant role of the master author whose work is not listed in this chapter but is foundational in every aspect of this project. That author needs no introduction, for His work is the greatest book ever written—the Bible—which is the Word of God.

Karen Baker-Fletcher and Garth Kasimu Baker-Fletcher in their book, *My Sister, My Brother: Womanist and Xodus God-Talk*,¹ present a lively theological dialogue between proponents of Womanist and Xodus thought. The terminology used in the titles presents a creative approach to African American theology. In each chapter, the authors lay out their positions on some of the core themes of theology and later engage in mutual critique and dialogue of each. This was eloquently captured in the term “Womanist Theology” which was coined by Alice Walker and is based on her definition of womanist which emphasizes a love for black woman’s history and culture. Xodus is a term created

¹Karen Baker-Fletcher and Gath Kasimu Baker-Fletcher, *My Sister, My Brother: Womanist and Xodus God Talk* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997).

by Kasimu in order to name the necessary theological, ethical, political, and economic analysis and constructive alternatives which must be addressed by second-generation Black theologians.

The Cost of Discipleship is one of the all-time great classics written by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a man who lived the life that he so prolifically addresses in this book. He speaks about cheap grace which he describes as “grace sold on the market like cheapjack wares”. It justifies sin without justifying the sinner. Costly grace is the hidden treasure which must be sought again and again, and calls us to follow Jesus. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship. Costly grace is the sanctuary of God. Cheap grace is preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance. Costly grace confronts us as a gracious call to follow Jesus.²

The *Equipping of Disciples*,³ edited by John Hendrix and Lloyd Householder, seeks to provide a “mixing tank” of Biblical and theological resources, contemporary education, and behavioral processes. It attempts to mix “calling” and “grace” with the language of goal-setting, human relation; laboratory training, and supervision. Through these attempts, the editors hope to provide resources to aid the church in the task of equipping saints for discipleship. The key word in this book is “equipping”.

In his book, *The Web of Preaching: New Options in Homiletic Method*, Dr. Richard L. Eslinger created an outstanding work based on an analysis made by Wellford Hobbie who, in 1982, noted that there were three major movements in homiletics that were moving churches’ topical preachings. It was from this analysis of Hobbie’s work

²Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: The McMillan Company, 1949), 43.

³John Hendrix and Lloyd Householder, ed., *The Equipping of Disciples* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1977).

that Dr. Eslinger shaped his writing around five homileticsians who represent the three movements. He cites Charles Rice (story-telling), Henry Mitchell (narrative preaching in the black tradition), Eugene Lowery (the narrative sermonic plot), Fred Craddock (an inductive model), and David Buttrick (a phenomenological approach). The three approaches that Hobbie identified were (1) orthodoxy, (2) an inductive approach, a narrative/story form, and (3) a method based on the movement and structure of the Biblical text.⁴

James H. Evans, Jr. investigates systematic theology from a Black perspective. In his book, *We Have Been Believers: An African American Systematic Theology*, he clarifies several tasks of the Black theologian. The first task is to clarify the contexts—historical, sociopolitical, cultural, and intellectual—in which the African American Christian faith is affirmed. The second task is to articulate, interpret, and assess the essential doctrinal affirmations of African American faith for the contemporary African American community of faith. The third task is to examine the moral implications of that faith for Christian witnessing in the world. Evans affirms that the content of God’s revelation is liberation.⁵ The primary record of that revelation is the Bible. It is the Great and Mighty God of the oppressed who is revealed in the Bible. The zenith of God’s self-revelation is Jesus Christ who is affirmed as both liberator and mediator. Jesus Christ embodies being black in such a way that the result is the emergence of a distinct community of faith, and this community, vivified by the spirit of

⁴Richard L. Eslinger, *The Web of Preaching: New Options in Homiletic Method* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 12.

⁵James H. Evans, Jr., *We Have Been Believers: An African American Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992).

freedom, provisionally manifests and anticipates the justification of the present social and human order, a justification so radical and complete that those who are now counted as last shall be first.⁶

In the book, *The Steward: A Biblical Symbol come of Age*,⁷ Douglas John Hall tries to capture the most basic Biblical meaning of stewardship and apply it to our social context. He approaches stewardship through Biblical, historical, theological, and ecclesiastical venues. He compares Scriptural teaching and stewardship by concentrating on Jesus' parables. He believes, as does this author, that the church's understanding and practices of stewardship has been distorted by its alliance with institutional power. Hall concludes his book by discussing stewardship as a theological possibility and worldly necessity.

In the book, *Heart and Head: Black Theology-Past, Present, and Future*,⁸ Dwight N. Hopkins presents a variety of challenges for the 21st century Black theologian by drawing on the rich fountainhead of African American experiences, and in return, offers them as lessons for a healthy human community. This book explores Black theology from the perspective of Womanist theology (a preferential option for the poor and the oppressed), spirituality, and transformation in Black theology, as well as explores the new Black heterosexual male and a Black American perspective on interfaith dialogue in the ecumenical association of third world theologians.

⁶James H. Evans, Jr., *We Have Been Believers: An African-American Systematic Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 9.

⁷Douglas John Hall, *The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Comes of Age* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989).

⁸Dwight N. Hopkins, *Heart and Head: Black Theology-Past, Present and Future* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

Bill Hull discusses in his book, *The Disciple-Making Church*, the role of the church in the disciple-making process. He traces the first church in Jerusalem, its practices and priorities, and how it relates to a well-principled church of today.

Hull continues his argument for discipleship in his other book, *The Disciple-Making Pastor*, and states that the contemporary church is in a crisis. This argument stems from the belief that its greatest weakness lies with the millions of its supposed members who are not really involved in the church. This book presents a plan for pastors to produce healthy Christians. It contends that Christians become healthy when they take the Great Commission seriously, in other words, by becoming and making disciples.⁹ Hull deals with the Biblical foundations for disciple-making, the role of the disciple-making pastor, and the understanding, commitment, and practices of a disciple-making pastor.

The purpose of *Christian Theology: An Introduction to Its Traditions and Tasks*, edited by Peter C. Hodgson and Robert H. King, is twofold: (1) introduce students to Christian traditions in theology and (2) pose the issues for systematic theology in the present day by showing how traditions have been challenged and transformed under the pressure of modern thought.¹⁰ The main body of this work deals with specific theological topics: God, revelation, creation and providence, human being, sin and evil, Christ and salvation, church, sacraments, spirit, and Christian life.

The book, *A Theology of Personal Ministry: Spiritual Giftedness in the Local Church*, deals with theology of personal ministry. The authors, Lawrence O. Richards

⁹Bill Hull, *The Disciple-Making Pastor* (Tarrytown: Fleming H Revell, 1988), 15.

¹⁰Peter C. Hodgson and Robert H. King, *Christian Theology: An Introduction To Its Traditions and Tasks* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994).

and Gib Martin, believe that the people of God do not have a clear sense of their own identity as a “ministering people”, which they define as “each one called, empowered, and gifted by God to continue the work of Jesus in the world”.¹¹ In Part 1, the Theological Core, the authors review covenant relationships that lead to the new covenant people of today. This leads to ideas of a Kingdom people and a servant people. In addition, the authors formulate the belief of an empowered theology, which is constructed by communicating a vision, building a community, making disciples, inspiring servants of one another, providing training in ministry, extending freedom, and coming to a better understanding of leadership in the body.

Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of The Religious History of Afro-American People (second edition), describes the Black religious experience. The author, Gayraud S. Wilmore, contends that although religion has always been one of the most important aspects of the life of Black people in the United States, it has been woefully neglected as an area of serious study by black and white scholars alike.¹² He takes us on a journey from the religion of slaves to Black power, Black people and theological renewal.

In *Introduction to Theology*, Owen C. Thomas and Ellen K. Wondra discuss the story of the Bible and through Christian theology attempts to understand and interpret these stories of what God has done and is doing. Their book suggests that theology is faith seeking understanding through which the church at every age reflects on the basis of

¹¹Lawrence O. Richards and Gib Martin, *A Theology of Personal Ministry: Spiritual Giftedness in The Local Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981).

¹²Gayraud S. Wilmore, *Black Religion and Black Radicalism: An Interpretation of the Religious History of Afro-American People* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994), 3.

its existence and the context of its message.¹³ Their book is designed to introduce students to the study of theology.

Dr. Terry Thomas' book, *Becoming a Fruit Bearing Disciple*, is a very enlightening dissertation that presents a series of lectures for the main purpose of helping believers become fruit-bearing disciples. It carries the reader from the mission of the church as defined in the Great Commission to the cost of discipleship in Chapter 2. Chapters 3 and 4 lift the lifestyle of Jesus as the pattern for discipleship. Chapter 5 states that obedience leads to a condition of the heart, and Chapter 6 discusses that condition of the heart enables fruit-bearing. The last two chapters emphasize the necessity of staying attached to Jesus in order to experience the joy of discipleship.¹⁴

Black Man's Religion: Can Christianity be Afrocentric? is a pro-Christian book on religion and history from a Black perspective. Some say that Christianity is a White man's religion. Although there is a long and ugly history of abuse of African Americans at the hand of Euro-American Christians, authors Glenn Usry and Graig S. Keener contend that Christianity can be Afrocentric.¹⁵ They deal with the Black religious experience from geographical identification which investigates the African heritage. Also from the perspective of color identification, they declare that Black is beautiful. They then assert that our religious perspective comes from our common identity that was developed through our common experiences of oppression.

¹³Owen C. Thomas and Ellen K. Wondra, *Introduction to Theology* (Harrisburg: Moorehouse Publishing, 2002), 1.

¹⁴Terry Thomas, *Becoming A Fruit-Bearing Disciple* (North Carolina: Voice of Rehoboth, 2005), 22-23.

¹⁵Glenn Usry and Graig S. Keener, *Black Mans Religion: Can Christianity Be Afrocentric*. (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1996), 9.

In his book, *Your Church Can Grow: Seven Vital Steps of a Healthy Church*, Peter C. Wagner defines church growth as “all that is involved in bringing men and women who do not have a personal relationship to Jesus Christ into fellowship with Him and into responsible church membership.”¹⁶ Wagner uses Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, Redwood Chapel, Denver First Nazarene, First Baptist Hammond, and Chapel Hill Harvester as examples of growing churches. His thrust is to answer the question of why some churches grow and others do not. His answer revolves around the Biblical roots of Christian growth as found in Luke 19:10, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” The ingredient in all Christian work is faith, pastoral leadership and authority, a well mobilized laity, a viable philosophy of ministry, and an evangelistic draw from a viable discipleship program.

The book, *Called Committed: World Changing Discipleship*,¹⁷ poses a challenge for the church to become the unifying force in a world that is falling apart by becoming true Disciples of Christ. True discipleship is established as followers of Christ dedicate their lives fully to Him. Moreover, they are willing to present their bodies to Him as a living sacrifice so that they can be His agents in the healing of the whole creation. Author David Watson emphasizes that disciples are called. They are called by Jesus, called to Jesus, called to obey, called to suffer, and called irrespective of qualification. Discipleship requires us to make disciples, to live in the Spirit, to pray, and to study the Word of God that we might be ready to wage a spiritual warfare as we engage in

¹⁶Peter C. Wagner, *Your Church Can Grow: Seven Vital Steps of a Healthy Church* (Ventura: Regal Books, 1976).

¹⁷David Watson, *Called and Committed: World Changing Discipleship* (Wheaton: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1982).

evangelism. There is a cost for true discipleship, and it should lead us into a simple lifestyle that abounds in hope.

*Covenant Discipleship: Christian Formation Through Mutual Accountability*¹⁸ is a “how to” manual on the creation of covenant discipleship groups, following the early Methodist class meetings. It is also a reference guide for groups that have questions on the nature and purpose of covenant discipleship in general. Author David Lowes Watson, however, considers discipleship as a discipline that is learned through self-control and contends that while this is a part of a process, discipleship is a lifestyle that is lived through Spirit control.

Lance Webb draws from true life experiences in his book, *Disciplines for Life*,¹⁹ and incorporates the agonies and ecstasies of living a disciplined Christian life, which ultimately has led to the decisive shaping of the Christian witness.

In his book, *Black and African Theologies: Siblings or Distant Cousins?*²⁰, Dr Josiah U. Young, a student of Dr. James Cone who was also his mentor, critically examines the messages of North American Black theology with its emphasis on liberation as well as the theology of post-independent Africa with its concern for indigenization, noting points of accord and divergence.

¹⁸David Lowes Watson, *Covenant Discipleship: Christian Formation Through Mutual Accountability* (Nashville:Discipleship Resources, 1996).

¹⁹ Lance Webb, *Disciplines for Life* (Nashville: The Upper Room, 1972).

²⁰Josiah U. Young, *Black and African Theologies: Siblings or Distant Cousins?* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1986), 8.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Historical Foundation

The word “disciple” is often misunderstood and misused in our context of ministry. This has occurred because average Christians have associated the concept of discipleship with evangelism only. But, a disciple is more than just a witness telling someone about Jesus. Discipleship is the process of becoming like Jesus. It is a transformational process that makes us a living witness in word, in deed, and in action. The disciple becomes a living epistle for Christ. Before we venture into the historical foundations of this work, we need to reflect on the ideas that shape our understanding of the work and introduce some supporting works that will be used to formulate the hypothesis for this research project.

M. Eugene Boring in his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew 4:18-22 reflects on discipleship with these words:

Modern readers are tempted to refashion the Biblical pictures of discipleship into categories more comfortable with our own ideologies and idealisms. To become a disciple means to accept Jesus’ principles for living, for example. There is an element of truth in such re-interpretations, but Matthew’s understanding of discipleship cannot be reduced to this modern rationalism and idealism. In this text, Jesus appears disruptively in our midst and calls us not to admire him or accept his principles, not even to accept him as our personal Savior, but to follow him. A reasonable response to his command “follow me” would be “Where are you going?” The fishermen do not yet know the destination, which they must learn along the way (cf. 10:5-42, 16:13-28). Although Matthew does not use the vocabulary of “believe” and “faith” in

this story, he here pictures the nature of faith that is at the heart of discipleship (cf. Heb. 11:8).¹

Notice that Boring suggests from the text that the fishermen did not know the destination or the way and that they had to learn as they traveled along the way. Discipleship is the active process of learning the way as you travel along the way with the one who is disciplining you.

Boring continues his argument by addressing where this faith, this discipleship building faith, comes from, and to whom this faith is available.

For Matthew, Jesus' call to discipleship was spoken not only to a few disciples in 1st century Galilee but to the church throughout history (28:20). Jesus is the one who sows the word that produces good fruit (13:3, 18, 24, 37); he is the one who builds the church. (16:18)²

Matthew Crosby suggests that there is a special relationship and a special emphasis on discipleship found in the Gospel of Matthew that is not limited only to the Great Commission found in Matt. 28:18-20 but is replete throughout its pages.

Of all the Gospels, only Matthew uses the word *matheteutheis*: it can mean to be "one learned" in the teacher's way, "one disciplined" to a teacher, or one who puts into practice the masters' teachings.³

One of the most unique aspects of the Gospel of Matthew is the picture that is painted by the author's name, Matthew (*matthaious* in Greek) and its relationship or similarity to the word disciple (*mathetes*). The thrust of the book and the word "taught

¹M. Eugene Boring, *The New Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 8, The Gospel of Matthew* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 170.

²Boring, 170-171.

³Wes Howard-Brook and Sharon H. Ringe, ed., *The New Testament: Introducing the Way of Discipleship* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 17.

(*matheteutheis*) is the processs used in developing disciples. As a matter of fact,

Crosby states:

Given the historical context—especially for us readers today, who are called to put into practice “everything” Jesus has taught (28:20), the Matthew (*matthaious*) of the first gospel appears likely to have been a representative appellation for any disciple (*matheteis*) who has been taught (*mathetautheis*) and who understands (*synienai*) the implications of what has been taught.⁴

Thus, Matthew represents as well as presents discipleship as the process of moving believers from inactivity to an active life of faith as they come into an understanding of what they are being taught through the Word and life of Jesus Christ. This author, however, argues that the concept of discipleship, although it is highly emphasized in Matthew and the other Gospels, is quite evident in the Old Testament and secular history.

The Old Testament words that are the Hebrew counterparts for the Greek word *mathetis* (disciple) are *talmidh* and *limmudh*. Some theological thinkers have suggested that the concept of discipleship is absent in Old Testament scripture because of the relative absence of the aforementioned terms. Karl Rengstorf argues that

If the term is missing, so too is that which it serves to denote. Apart from the formal relation of teacher and pupil, the Old Testament, unlike the Classical Greek and Hellenism, has no master-disciple relation. Whether among the prophets or the scribes we seek in vain for anything corresponding to it.⁵

Michael Wilson, however, points out that even though Rengstorf’s arguments about the absence of the concept of discipleship in the Old Testament are followed by

⁴Howard-Brook and Sharon H. Ringe, 17

⁵Michael J. Wilkins, *Discipleship in the Ancient World and Matthew’s Gospel*, 2nd Ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995), 43

pupils and scholarly works, he appears to have overstated his cause. In the first instance, he overlooks the adjectival form *limmudth* which is derived from *limadh*. In the second instance, because he inadequately defines the relationship between the terminology and the concept of discipleship, he inordinately overstates the absence of discipleship.⁶ Wilson goes on to state that, “even though traditional Jewish ‘disciple’ terminology are used, only marginally recent educational and sociological studies have suggested forms of master-disciple relations in existence in the Old Testament.”⁷

The term *talmidh* appears to be the Hebrew equivalent of *mathetis* and is derived from the Hebrew verb for “learn” (*lamadh*) and literally means “taught one”, although it is normally designated a “beginning scholar” in rabbinical use.⁸ *Talmudh* is found only once in the Old Testament in 1 Chronicles 25:8. It is found in conjunction with the training of the temple musicians. It makes a clear distinction between the pupil and the teacher, and is best described as “one engaged in a learning process”, such as an apprentice learning a trade.⁹ The Scripture reads, “And they cast lots, ward against ward, as well the small as the great, the teacher as the scholar”¹⁰ This passage of Scripture denotes the fact that David, although he did not build the temple, did establish a detailed structure for the responsibility and duties for those that served in the temple.

⁶Wilkins, 44.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., 46.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰1 Chronicles 25:8 (King James Version).

1 Chron. 25 details the division of the 288 musicians who were designated for service. All of the musicians were from the families of Asaph, Heman, and Juduthum. These 288 men and women provided instrumental music and supervision for the 4,000 temple singer/musicians mentioned in 1 Chron. 23:5. Notice that all of the sons and daughters among the 288 were under the direction of their fathers. They were trained and instructed for their service in the temple of God.¹¹ Therefore, in 1 Chron. 25:8, lots were cast to determine the duties and schedules for both student and teacher.

There were twenty-four groups chosen with twelve people in each group. Note, however, that the selection of the scholar, pupil, and disciple was done through the process of divine selection. The casting of lots was a common method for determining the divine will of God in Israel during Old and New Testament times. Saul, Israel's first king, was selected in this manner (1 Samuel 10:16-26), and the conquered land was apportioned among the tribes by lots (Numbers 26:55, Joshua 14:2). In the New Testament, Matthias was chosen in this way to replace Judas among the twelve apostles (Acts 1:26).¹²

The other term used in the Old Testament for disciple is *limmudth*. *Limmudth* is the adjective "taught" and is also derived from the verb *lamadh*.¹³ This word is used in several locations in the Old Testament, e.g., Isaiah 8:16, and pertains to those who are to be the recipients of binding and sealing of divine revelation. Isa. 8:16 says: "Bind up the

¹¹1 Chronicles 25:6 (King James Version).

¹²Paul J. Achtemeier, ed., *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary*. (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publisher, 1996), 624.

¹³Wilkins, 46.

testimony, seal the laws among my disciples.” These instructions appear in the middle of a prophecy to Isaiah concerning the downfall of Damascus and Samaria by the hands of Assyria. These events took place about 734 B.C.E. when Tiglath-Pileser III, Rezin, and Pekah were the kings of Assyria, Syria, and Damascus, respectively. The people in Isa. 8:9 are admonished to not give into the ways of the Assyrians because many would stumble and fall. Isaiah instructs his disciples to bind the testimony and seal the law.

While there is tension among some commentators as to whether these disciples are disciples of God or of Isaiah, Rengstorf acknowledges that *limmudhim* in Isa.8:16 most naturally appear to be Isaiah, but he still hesitates to call them fellowship “disciples”, rather “he prefers to call them a community gathered around the prophets.”¹⁴ This author submits that the matter of whose disciple it is may be a mute argument because even if it was Isaiah’s disciple—and it probably was—the fact was that Isaiah was God’s follower and that fact alone would make his disciple also God’s disciple. The Scriptures pick up this theme as Paul declares to his followers, “Be ye followers of me even as I also (am) of Christ.”¹⁵

Another theme that we see in this verse is the idea of stewardship that coincides with 1 Corinthians 4:1, “Let a man so account of us, as of ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.”¹⁶ Therefore, the disciples of Isa. 8:16 are entrusted with the Word of God as stewards of the faith and keepers of the law. The idea of stewardship has always been a mandate of God and promotes the development of one’s

¹⁴Wilkins, 48.

¹⁵1 Corinthians 11:1 (King James Version).

¹⁶Ibid., 4:1.

relationship to him, which is the basic concept of discipleship. His first commandment to man, after he was created in God's own image, was a commandment of stewardship: "be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it;"¹⁷ This mandate has not changed, and it is our responsibility to fulfill God's mandate for our lives in the context of our church and community.

Another occurrence of *limmudh* is found in Isa. 50:4, "The Lord Yahweh has given me the tongue of disciples (*limmudh*) that I may know how to answer the weary; with a word he awakens in the morning, in the morning he awakens my ear to listen as disciples (*limmudhim*)"¹⁸ This passage suggests that even in Old Testament times the disciple was trained to listen to the Words of Yahweh (God), starting with his rising in the morning.

This author was blessed to visit Israel in March of 2009. While on the flight from Newark to Tel Aviv, there was a young Jewish man, perceived to be an orthodox Jew by his dress, who sat in front of this author. At a certain time during the flight, the young man began to wrap a leather cord around his arm to attach a small box to his left arm. He then attached another leather box to his forehead with yet another leather cord. The young man then rose from his seat and moved to the rear of the plane where he found room to drape his head and shoulder with a prayer shawl and began to pray. This author later discovered that the boxes attached to his head and arm are called *phylacteries* in Greek and *tefillin* in Hebrew.¹⁹ The *tefillin* is worn based on the Biblical commandment

¹⁷Genesis 1:28 (King James Version).

¹⁸Isaiah 50:4 (King James Version).

¹⁹Susan Marcus, *Enter into His Gates: To Your Jewish roots* (Israel: T-Land Ltd.), 77.

from Deuteronomy 6:4-9, in the prayer known as the *Shema*, the “Watch Word” of the Jewish people. It says, “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.... You shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes.”²⁰

In the box that is attached to the head, there are four separate compartments, each containing a Hebrew quotation. The first compartment contains Exodus 6:4-9 and bids them to remember their freedom from slavery and to celebrate Passover. The second compartment contains Exod. 13:11-16 which refers to the redemption of the first born. The third and fourth compartment contains two sections of the *Shema* prayer (Deut. 6:4-9 and 11:11-30).²¹ Each box is imprinted with the Hebrew letters *Shin*, *Dialed*, and *Yod* which spells *Shaddai*, an acronym for God.²² The *tefillin* is worn only on weekdays and not on *Shabbat* or at festivals because the holy days and holy festivals are in themselves reminders of the covenant between God and Israel.

The prayer shawl, or *tallit* as it is called in Hebrew, is worn by men from the age of Bar Mitzvah. It is usually made from wool, but silk is sometimes used. The wool is a very important symbol, as it symbolizes the almighty shepherd taking care of the sheep that he loves. The person wrapping himself in the shawl is considered to be wrapping themselves in the love of God as he prays.²³

Along with the *tefillin* and the *tallit*, there is another item that shows the Israelites' love and respect for the Word of God, and that is the *mezuzah*. The *mezuzah* is

²⁰Deuteronomy 6:4 (King James Version).

²¹Marcus, 78.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid., 24.

a special object that is placed on the door post of a Jewish home. Inside the *mezuzah*, written by a scribe on parchment, are the same words from the *Shema* that are placed in the *tefillin* (Deut. 6:4-9 and 11:13-21). The *mezuzah* may be made of any material—ceramic, glass, wood, or silver—but one consistent feature of every *mezuzah* is the Hebrew letter *shem*. *Shem* is the abbreviation of God’s most mystic name *Shaddai*. Sometimes the complete word is spelled out, and it stands for “*Shomer D’latot Yisrael*”, or guardian of the gates of Israel. The *mezuzah* is placed on the righthand side of each doorway, both inside and outside, with the exception of the bathroom. Traditionally the person will touch the *mezuzah* when entering or exiting a building and then touch their lips to remind them to keep the Word of God on their lips.

These instruments were training tools used in the life of the Jewish community in Old Testament days as well as today to emphasize the importance of God’s Word in the life of His people. Notice that the emphasis for the *mezuzah* and the *tefillin* was the *Shema* which starts with the words “Hear, O Israel” placed in the compartment labeled *Shaddai* or God. In other words, to be in God or to be a disciple of God, you have to hear God or be disposed to listen to God. Dr. Terry Thomas in his book, *Becoming a Fruit-Bearing Disciple*, declares that because obedience is essential for a disciple of Jesus to become fruitful, perhaps more than anything obedience entails listening.²⁴

Because the disciples were trained to listen to the Word of God with an attentive ear, the disciple knows that God has given him a disciple’s tongue, a tongue that speaks the message he receives from the Master in order to speak strength into the lives of the

²⁴Terry Thomas, *Becoming a Fruit-Bearing Disciple*. (Raleigh: Voice of Rehoboth Publishing, 2005), 117.

weary. The *limmudhim* in Isa. 8:16, 50:4 were a group gathered around a master in such a way that they were referenced as an intimate possessive (“my disciples”, Isa.8:16) and that their relationship was characterized by some kind of educational process which accentuated speaking and listening (Isa. 50:4).²⁵

The word for “learned” in Hebrew is *limmud*, and the disciples are called the *limmudhim*. The Hebrew word for “listen” is described in Isa. 50:4 as “The Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens me morning by morning. He awakens my ear to hear as the learned.”

The Hebrew word for “hear” in Deut. 6:4 (“Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, The Lord is one!”) is the same Hebrew word *sham* which means to perceive by the ear, to have the power to hear, to hear with attention or interest, to understand and then consent, to agree, to yield, or to be obedient to. Therefore, in the context of our text “to listen” or “to hear” means that you have to act upon that which you hear or to respond to your listening by becoming obedient to what you have heard. Dr Terry Thomas, quoting Herb Miller says:

In the language of discipleship, that special relationship between rabbi and student, the phrase “listening to his word” meant “following disciple” It was a technical term for pupil. In the Greek, disobedience is *parakoe* (in contrast), the deliberate refusal to listen. Listening is essential to being obedient.²⁶

The Israelites listened to Moses during their sojourn in the wilderness. Moses was the voice of God to the people and the voice of the people to God. In other words, God

²⁵Wilkins, 50.

²⁶Thomas, 117-118.

spoke and Moses listened, and when Moses spoke the people listened. The Scripture says in Exodus: “Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain.”²⁷ And the Lord spoke to him and said, “Now, therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my commandments, then you shall be a treasure to me....”²⁸ Moses, in turn, called the elders and gave them all the words that the Lord had given him. “Then all the people gathered and said, ‘All that the Lord has spoken we will do!’”²⁹ Moses following the command of God invited them to the mountain to hear directly from God, but the people were afraid and “then they said to Moses, ‘You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.’”³⁰ The people, therefore, were committed to listening to the words of the Lord, through God’s servant Moses. The expression “we will hear” implies that they will follow and be obedient to the words that Moses brings to them from God.

Joshua, in like manner, listened to the words of Moses. Although it is not openly expressed in the text, it is implied. The Scripture in Numbers says: “Joshua, son of Nun, who had been Moses’ aide since youth, spoke up and said, ‘Moses, my Lord, stop them.’”³¹ This expression was in response to the fact that two men, Eldad and Medad, had prophesied in the camp. Joshua, being an assistant or servant of Moses, and one of his choice men, thought they were trying to usurp Moses’ authority as their leader. Joshua

²⁷Exodus 19:3 (New King James Version).

²⁸Ibid., 19:5.

²⁹Ibid., 19:8.

³⁰Ibid., 20:19.

³¹Numbers 11:28 (New King James Version).

was an aide and an assistant to Moses, and in the book of Joshua, the Scripture says:

“After the death of Moses, the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spoke to Joshua, the son of Nun, Moses’ assistant....”³² We now find that this faithful aide of Moses, who listened to Moses’ words, received a direct word from God and is elevated to take Moses place.

The book of 1 Kings paints a picture of the call to prophet Elisha. The Scripture says:

So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him. And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, “Please let me kiss my father and my mother, then I will follow you.” And he said to him, “Go back again, for what have I done to you.”³³

In 1 Kings 19:16, Elijah is instructed by God to anoint Elisha as prophet in his stead. Elijah, faithful to God’s command, calls Elisha, not in words but by the unmistakable symbolic act of casting over him his prophetic mantle as he passes by. To spread one’s mantle, cloak or outer garment over a person meant to claim that person for oneself. For example, in the book of Ruth, Ruth follows the instructions of her mother-in-law, Naomi, and meets with Boaz. After Boaz finished eating and drinking, he went to lie down. Ruth came to him stealthily, uncovered his feet and lay down beside him. Boaz awoke during the night, finding her there, asked who she was. “I am your servant Ruth,” she said. ‘Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a Kinsman

³²Joshua 1:1 (New King James Version).

³³1 Kings 19:19-20 (New King James Version).

Redeemer.”³⁴ In this, Ruth said that she wanted Boaz to exercise his right as Kinsman Redeemer to claim her by casting the corner of his mantle over her, as his own. In like manner, Elijah claimed Elisha as his servant/disciple and his successor. Elisha was being tested, and he passed by showing his inward and spiritual preparedness to immediately respond to Elijah’s call.

Another test was one’s willingness to completely sever all ties to his old life to partake of a new one. Elisha sacrificed the oxen with which he plowed. He burnt the plowshare that had been drawn and the yoke that had bound them together, and used them in preparation of a farewell feast. He was completely committed to follow and listen to the teachings of Elijah.

Another means of tracking discipleship in the Old Testament besides terminology is the concept of discipleship. Barr suggest that concept history is not necessarily equivalent to the history of terminology. The relative absence of disciple terminology in the Old Testament should not be taken as a lack of the concept. The type of concept needs to be delineated by the use of the terms in context as well as other evidence.³⁵

The concept of discipleship is first noticed in groups of organized prophets formed during the time of Samuel. In 1 Sam. 10:5-10, a group or band of prophets encounters Saul, as was prophesied by Samuel. Another group appears in 1 Sam. 19:20-24 with a company or band of prophets over whom Samuel presided. Since Samuel seems to be the transitional point from the judges to the prophets (cf. 1 Sam. 7:6; 15:7 with 1 Sam. 3:20), some have suggested that he gathered the prophets and became their

³⁴Ruth 3:9 (King James Version).

³⁵Wilkins, 51.

leader in an attempt to preserve the amphictyonic (their common intent) supervision which the prophetic office enjoyed.³⁶ These groups of prophets only appear in 1 Kings and 2 Kings (1 Kings 20:35; 2 Kings 2:3, 5, 7, 15; 4:1, 38; 5:22; 6:1; 9:1) and only in reference to the Northern Kingdom.³⁷ E. J. Young in his book, *My Servants the Prophets*, suggest that the sons of the prophets were assistants to the great prophets, Elijah and Elisha, in making known the will of God at this particular time to the nation. He especially emphasizes the term “son” as signifying a close and intimate relationship, best described by the concept of “discipleship”.³⁸

The story of Samuel is a good example of the son-father relationship developed in discipleship. Samuel, the son of Elkanah, was an Ephraimite from the mountains of Ephraim. His mother, Hannah, who was barren before his birth, had prayed for a child during her visit to the temple in Shiloh and promised to devote him to the service of Yahweh. “Then she made a vow and said, ‘O Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the afflictions of your maidservant ... but give your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the Lord.’”³⁹ God blessed her with a son, Samuel, and faithful to her word she gave him to the Lord at Shiloh. Eli became the father/instructor of his young disciple, Samuel. Samuel himself after being trained by Eli set up a school of prophets at Ramah.⁴⁰

³⁶Wilkins, 53-54.

³⁷Ibid., 56.

³⁸Ibid., 58.

³⁹1 Samuel 1:11 (New King James Version).

⁴⁰Ibid., 19:18-21.

This is the origin of the practice of calling a priest “father”. He exercised the role of the father in teaching the children (2 Kings 2:3, 12).⁴¹

Even though the concept of discipleship is not well developed in the early Old Testament period, in post-exilic Judaism, it becomes common and significant. In this period, the idea of “following” (*akoloutheo*) and “disciple” (*mathetes*) were closely linked. These two words describe the relationship of a pupil to a teacher of the Torah. The pupil, who chooses to subordinate himself to a rabbi, follows the teacher everywhere he goes, learning from him and, above all, serving him. The goal of that time was to have a complete knowledge of the Torah and the ability to practice it in every situation. The Torah in Deuteronomy is perceived as Israel’s cultural and national identity.⁴² The Torah may have originally connoted the teachings imparted by God the parent to the child, Israel.⁴³

During the Classical period, *mathetes* (disciple) was used in a general way to denote a “learner”, usually describing a diligent student.”⁴⁴ It suggests a person engaged in learning from someone who has already acquired the desired skill or knowledge. *Mathetes* is used in a context dealing with the education of wardens by state entities, music, and medicine.⁴⁵ Early in the Classical period, *mathetes* also designated an

⁴¹Achtemeier, 79.

⁴²Ibid., 1162.

⁴³Ibid., 1163.

⁴⁴Michael J. Wilkins, *The Concept of Disciples in Matthews Gospel* (New York: E. J. Brill, 1988), 11.

⁴⁵Robert Maynard Hutchins, ed., “Plato” and “Euthydemus” in *Great Books of the Western World*, vol. 7 (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1952), 65, 796.

adherent and representative of a particular cultural milieu.⁴⁶ In that period, a Scythian named Anacharis is reported to have been a “learner of the ways of Hellas”.⁴⁷ The story suggests that Anacharis travelled through Greece and not only observed the practices and wisdom of various city-states, but also became an adherent and representative of the Hellas customs.⁴⁸

Socrates also writes about the adherents of the Spartan culture: “All these were enthusiast; lovers and disciples of the Spartan culture; and you can recognize that character in their wisdom by the short, memorable saying that fell from each of them.”⁴⁹

Plato’s writings reveal his own attitude toward the use of *mathetes* and are considered the main source for discovering Socrates’ attitude as well. Plato was, in fact, a student of Socrates and was the only disciple to fully understand and develop the Socratic teachings.⁵⁰

Xenophon of Athens was another student of Socrates. Xenophon does not use the term *mathetes* as frequently as Plato. He uses it only three times, but his use indicates a broader use of the term. In his first use, *Hunting* (1.2.2), Xenophon uses *mathetes* to refer to those who practice skills taught by Cheiron.⁵¹ The second time Xenophon uses it in

⁴⁶Wilkins, 13.

⁴⁷Hutchins, “Herodotus/Thucydides,” 137.

⁴⁸Wilkins, 13.

⁴⁹Ibid., 14.

⁵⁰Ibid., 15.

⁵¹Ibid., 23.

Memorabilia (1.6.3.4) when a Sophistic teacher, Antiphon, mocks the poverty of Socrates with the intention of drawing his companions away from him.⁵²

Aristotle of Stageiros uses *mathetes* only once, even though he wrote volumes of material. He points out that Parmenides is a student and follower of the teachings of Xenophanes.⁵³ Aristotle points out that even though Parmenides was a student of Xenophanes and followed the teachings of his master, Parmenides, he still was able to advance some ideas of his own.

In the Hellenistic period, Diodorus of Sicily (60-30 B.C.) lived just prior to the time of Christ. In Book 23 (2.1.13, 26) of his *Bibliotheca*, he uses *mathetes* three times and speaks of Romans learning to sail from the Cathaginians, master sailing teachers.⁵⁴ Other scholars of that period include Chrysostom (c. A.D. 40-120), Stoic philosopher Epictetus (c. A.D. 50-130), Plutarch (A.D. 46-120), and Diogenes Laertius (c. 3rd century A.D.) used *mathetes* throughout their writings, some more than others.⁵⁵ These examples show that discipleship was used and practiced in the secular periods of history as well as the old and New Testament periods.

During the time of Jesus, the emphasis changed to the importance of the human authority who interpreted the Torah. Because the rabbi's knowledge gave him direct access to the Scriptures which facilitated "right" hearing and "right" understanding, he becomes a kind of mediator between the *talmidin* (learners) and the Torah. To listen to

⁵²Wilkins, 23.

⁵³Ibid., 25.

⁵⁴Ibid., 33.

⁵⁵Ibid., 33-35.

the Scriptures without the guidance of a teacher was something to be avoided at all cost. Learning at that time was determined by the authority of the teacher and his interpretation of the Torah.⁵⁶ As a matter of fact, in the New Testament, disciples were identified by the school of thought and the rabbi under whom he studied.

The Pharisees liked to think of themselves a Moses' disciples.⁵⁷ The Scripture says: "Then they reviled him, and said, thou art his disciple; but we are Moses' disciples."⁵⁸ The Pharisees' declaration that they were disciples of Moses highlights the superior place given to Moses in their hearts and minds.

The law is the central feature of the Pentateuch, and so the lawgiver assumes importance. It is Moses who gives the law, which originates from God, to Israel. Moses brought the law engraved on tablets of stone. He proclaimed the law and ordinances that constituted a significant portion of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.⁵⁹ He was, in fact, the first teacher of the law. As a function of his role as national leader as well as interpreter of God's law, Moses also served as judge and arbitrator.⁶⁰ The Pharisees often used the idiom "to sit upon Moses' seat" which means to have the ability to interpret the laws of Moses with authority. In order to make that idiom a reality in their own minds, the Pharisees often declared that they were disciples of Moses.

⁵⁶Richards, 220.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸John 9:28 (King James Version).

⁵⁹Achtemeier, 707.

⁶⁰Ibid.

Looking even closer, we find that the Apostle Paul was a disciple of Gamaliel. He declares in the Scripture: “I am verily a man who am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are.”⁶¹ Notice that Paul declares he was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. The Greek word for feet is *pous* which is a term used to describe a disciple listening to their teacher’s instructions and are said to be at his feet.⁶² It is expressed even clearer in this passage: “And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his words.”⁶³

The Pharisees also had disciples of their own who followed them and their interpretation of the Torah. The Scripture says:

Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk, and they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians saying, Master, we know thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.⁶⁴

In the Gospels, those who linked themselves to John the Baptist were also identified as his disciples. “And the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast and they come and say unto him, why do the disciples of John and the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not.”⁶⁵ Note in this passage of Scripture that the Pharisees had disciples, John the Baptist had disciples, and Jesus had disciples. There are, however, some

⁶¹Acts 22:3 (King James Version).

⁶²Robert Young, *Analytical Concordance to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970), 340.

⁶³Luke 10:39 (King James Version).

⁶⁴Matthew 22:15-16 (King James Version).

⁶⁵Mark 5:18 (King James Version).

differences in the rabbinic approach to the selection of the disciples and Jesus' method. Normally the rabbinic disciples chose the rabbi whom they wanted for tutelage. However, in the case of Jesus, the Bible speaks of Jesus' choice of the twelve and says that he chose them "to be with him." He ordained twelve that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach.⁶⁶ Jesus' approach to training was different as well, in that it was not academic but relational. His goal was not simply the transmission of knowledge but the communication of likeness.⁶⁷ The Scripture puts it like this: "The disciple is not above his master but everyone that is perfect shall be as his master."⁶⁸

One of the most significant aspects of Jesus' ministry during his three-year earthly walk from baptism in Jordan to the cross at Calvary was the selection and development of his disciples. The Bible suggests that the development of disciples as practiced by Jesus the Christ in the Great Commission is an integral part of the mandate "to go" because it plainly states "to go and make disciples". Discipleship should develop or change inside the church such that it manifests itself on the outside. This is possible because discipleship changes or develops the individual into the like-mindedness of Christ Jesus. The Bible says, "Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus."⁶⁹

Discipleship develops stewards of the faith, who are faithful in all aspects of the faith, including reaching out to the community. It is the fundamental principle that affects

⁶⁶Mark 3:14 (King James Version).

⁶⁷Lawrence O. Richards and Gib Martin, *A Theology of Personal Ministry: Spiritual Giftedness in the Local Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 221.

⁶⁸Luke 6:40 (King James Version).

⁶⁹Philippians 2:5 (King James Version).

change in the faith community and is the mechanism that undergirds leadership development as well as laity mobilization. The Bible plainly states that the leaders of the early church, the Apostles, were the first disciples. Luke states in his book: “One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated, apostles.”⁷⁰

Discipleship is the fact of being or becoming a good steward of the Lord. It is deeper than just being a Christian and is essential to the spiritual development of the people of God to empower the community through faith. Discipleship should have a clear purpose. It is the contention of this author that if we go “back to the basics” and develop stewards of the faith (Disciples of Christ) who understand God’s purpose for their lives, then we as a faith community will not only grow individually but will also be catalysts in the spiritual growth of the community in which we live. This stewardship of faith can only be established by the Word of God, through preaching and teaching that will aid in the understanding of discipleship mandates, and it can have an impact in our community.

Owen Thomas and Ellen Wondra in their collaborate work, *Introduction to Theology*, suggests that “the main purpose of the church is not corporate worship but is ministry to the world, even as God’s concern is with the whole world.”⁷¹ This writer agrees with that statement and has become acutely aware of the need of our local assembly to step up to this mandate by developing our congregants’ desires to fulfill this

⁷⁰Luke 6:12-13 (King James Version).

⁷¹Owen C. Thomas and Ellen K. Wondra, *Introduction to Theology* (Harrisburg: Morehouse Publishing, 2002), 310.

mission. This mission is clearly defined in the Great Commission given to the church:

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, even to the very end of the age.”⁷²

The church’s mission field, in other words, is not lined with pews but is lined with the souls of the needy, the hurting and the lost that inhabit the community in which we live. The first principle of the Doctrine of Ministry presented by Thomas and Wondra is that Christian ministry is modeled on and is a continuation of the ministry of Christ and is enabled by the Holy Spirit.⁷³ It is important that leaders and laity of the church are aware that our main focus in the church is to reach out to our community as dictated by the mandate of Christ.

The method and principles for reaching out has historically been reconciliation through evangelism. Evangelism, however, is not just a project that rests solely on the shoulders of the pastor and ministerial associates in the church, it is a way of life that stems from a relationship with the Lord, and discipleship enhances that relationship. The responsibility belongs to the whole church, and it is the responsibility of every born-again believer/member of the church.

Crosby, as he continues to explore the nature and origin of discipleship, refers to a question asked by Jesus in chapter 13 of Matthew:

⁷²Matthew 28:19-20 (King James Version).

⁷³ Thomas and Wondra, 306.

Have you understood (*synienai*) all this?” Jesus asks upon completing the third discourse on the parables (13:1-53) which sets the disciples apart from those who see but do not perceive and hear but do not listen since they do not understand (13:13). When they answer “yes” he says to them: therefore every scribe who has been trained (*matheteutheis*) for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of the household (*oikodespotes*) who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old (13:52).⁷⁴

Crosby suggests that the *oikia* or *oikos*, Greek words for “house in relationship to the household” is one of the core principles in understanding the contemporary message of the book of Matthew because the church and the political system were structured around household principles.⁷⁵ It is in the midst of these household principles that we realize that stewardship is intricately woven into the discipleship process. As a matter of fact, “stewardship” is the English word used to translate the New Testament word *oikonomia*. The Greek word is a compound of *oikos*, meaning house, and *nomos*, meaning law. It thus refers to management of a house or of household affairs.⁷⁶ The management of the household was based on relationships, and the process of discipleship likewise is based on relationships.

The Bible as a whole—in both New and Old Testaments—contains some twenty-six different references to stewards and stewardship. The usage of the term in the Hebrew scripture is uniformly technical or literal; that is, it describes an actual office or vocation

⁷⁴Howard-Brook and Ringe, 17.

⁷⁵Howard-Brook and Ringe, 19.

⁷⁶T. A. Kantonen, *Theology for Christian Stewardship* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1956), 2.

in society. Nevertheless, it is the Old Testament's characterization of the "office of steward" that the more figurative or metaphorical use in the Christian gospel depends.⁷⁷

Crosby continues:

The *oikialoikos* involved persons and resources. The ordering (*nomos*) of each household was determined by the kind of relationship that took place among these persons (male/female, parent/child, master/slave) and the resources that were available (house, net, boat, land, monies). In the 1st century Mediterranean world, households tended to be based on the prevailing system of the empire. Thus, the majority were patriarchal. Jesus, however, envisioned a new kind of household under paternity (not patriarchy) or reign of God that would serve as an alternative to the prevailing model. Douglas R. A. Hare notes that this notion of *ekklesia* refers not simply to the local Christian assembly but to the whole movement.⁷⁸

The idea of fatherhood, as a principle of discipleship, seems to have been a theme in ancient Orient writings as well as other early church literature. William Kurz in his dissertation on Kenotic (emptying) imitations of Paul and Christ states:

Gutierrez highlights these important uses of the image of fatherhood in the ancient Orient and during the Hellenistic period. "Father" is always a title of honor, signifying or sharing in God's life-giving activity and immortalizing of oneself by projecting one's own existence on others.⁷⁹

Discipleship in like-manner projects the Image of our Father God or, should I say, gives a new luster to the Image of God that was imbedded in us in the Garden of Eden but was marred by sin after the fall. This idea of fatherhood as the premier relationship for training a child in the way he should go has been present throughout history. "The

⁷⁷Douglas John Hall. *The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Come of Age* (New York: Friendship Press, 1990), 3-32.

⁷⁸Howard-Brook and Ringe, 19.

⁷⁹Fernando Segovia, *Discipleship in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 107.

most common use for the image of fatherhood is the comparison of teaching activities to paternal duties. It envisages not merely formal teachings but the total formation of the disciple.”⁸⁰

Another important 1st century use of the fatherhood metaphor is illustrated by wisdom traditions. In the east, because wisdom and knowledge of life were passed from father to son, sages were viewed as fulfilling a paternal function. The father was responsible for the total education of his children in “the way” that leads to a long and happy life.⁸¹

Given the task, the sage viewed his disciple as his sons, and the more this view of wisdom encompassed the total religious life of the disciple, the more profound the notion of pedagogical fatherhood. Both the Qumran and the New Testament texts indicate these ideas were current in Judaism.⁸²

Boring concludes with a quote from Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, with these words: “Discipleship is not an offer man makes to Christ, it is only the call which creates the situation.”⁸³

Historically as we consider the term “disciple”, we find that while the idea of discipleship did not start with Christ’s call of the disciples in Matt. 4:18-22, it was at this juncture that the concept of discipleship was transformed. It became more than a learning experience; it became a growing experience. Herschel H. Hobbs suggests that

⁸⁰Segovia, 107.

⁸¹Ibid., 106.

⁸²Ibid., 107.

⁸³Boring, 171.

Two of the most prominent terms used for the Christian experience are birth and discipleship. Both imply a beginning and a continuing process. After birth from above, one should grow from a babe in Christ into an adult in him. This involves growth in stature, mind and spirit. As a disciple (learner or pupil) one enrolls in the first grade in Christian experience, the goal being full development in mind, spirit and skill”⁸⁴

Discipleship in the Matthew text, then, is the process of becoming fully developed in the likeness of Christ. It is the same likeness depicted in Genesis 1:26 wherein God declares: “And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness...”⁸⁵ The fathers of the faith as well as modern theologians have always wrestled with the theological implications of being made in the image of and likeness of God. This author believes that the image that was marred by sin, as it is recreated through the new birth (in Christ Jesus) can only be developed to its fullness through the process of discipleship.

John Calvin in his classic book, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, states:

But our definition of the image seems not to be complete until it appears more clearly what the faculties are, in which man excels and in which he is to be regarded as a mirror of the divine glory. This, however, cannot be better known than from the remedy provided for the corruption of nature. It cannot be doubted that when Adam lost his first estate he became alienated from God. Wherefore, although we grant that the image of God was not utterly effaced and destroyed in him, it was however so corrupted that anything which remains is fearful deformity; and, therefore, our deliverance begins with that renovation which we obtained from Christ, who is, therefore called the second Adam, because he restores us to true and substantial integrity. For although Paul, contrasting the quickening Spirit which believers receive from Christ, with the living soul which Adam was created (1 Cor. XI. 45), commends the richer measure of grace bestowed in

⁸⁴John Hendrix and Lloyd Householder, ed., *The Equipping of Disciple*. (Nashville: Broadman Press. 1977).

⁸⁵Genesis 1:26 (King James Version).

regeneration, he does not, however contradict the statement, that the end of regeneration is to form us anew in the image of God.⁸⁶

This author in the process of attending the various intense, five-day sessions on the United Theological School campus noticed that an expression used after the reading of God's Word by our United Methodist colleagues was quite inspiring. The phrase "the Word of God for the people of God" is very simplistic and yet very profound. The statement speaks to the fact that even the casual reading of God's Word has purpose, and it is directed to somebody in particular. In like manner, discipleship is for someone in particular. Lawrence Richards and Gib Martin ask a question in their book, *A Theology of Personal Ministry*:

"Who are the *laos*, the people of God? As we ask this question, it is fascinating to hear the voices of history speak out in such harmony. The reformers agree with those theologians today who insist that the church is a company of believer-priests called by God to minister."⁸⁷

Origen has a unique way of presenting God's Word, but he had a purpose that manifested itself even in his homily patterns of preaching as a grammarian lecturer. "For Origen, therefore, two principles governed his interpretation. The first was his recognition that, since all scripture is inspired by God, its meaning ought to be worthy of God and thus useful for edifying and nourishing the soul."⁸⁸ Origen used preaching to inspire spiritual formation of the congregation he served. He was, in fact, walking in the

⁸⁶John Calvin, *Institutes of The Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1989), 164 (Book 1, Chapter 15).

⁸⁷Richards and Martin, 12.

⁸⁸O. C. Edwards Jr., *A History of Preaching* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2004), 40-41.

process of discipleship. Martin Luther also used preaching as a tool to bring the hearers in to discipleship.

For Luther, preaching is as fully the Word of God as the incarnate Lord and the written Scripture. Therefore, any preacher who has finished a sermon should not pray for forgiveness of its deficiencies but rather, should say: “In this sermon, I have been an apostle and a prophet of Jesus Christ.” Anyone who cannot boast that should give up preaching, “for it is God’s Word and not (the preacher’s) and God ought not and cannot forgive it, but only confirm, praise, and crown it.” The distinction between the incarnate and the proclaimed Word is that “the former Word is the substance of God; the latter Word is in effect the power of God but is not God in substance, whether it is spoken by Christ or by a minister.” Thus, it can be said that “the preaching of the gospel is nothing else than Christ coming to us, or we being brought to him.”⁸⁹

This author has attempted to show in this historical foundation paper that the idea and use of discipleship is evident in Old Testament as well as in New Testament history. He has attempted to trace the Greek word *mathetis* (disciple) of New Testament times and its counterpart or equivalent *talmidh* and *limmudh* in the Old Testament period. Another means of tracking discipleship besides terminology was the concept of discipleship wherein the term may not have been used, but the principle of discipleship was evident.

This author also married the idea of discipleship with stewardship and traced the use of stewardship through Biblical history. The term “married” was used because

⁸⁹Edwards Jr., 288.

discipleship develops stewards of the faith. Stewards are keepers of the household, and Biblical stewards are keepers of the faith and reflect our relationship with God. It is our means of allowing the Image of God to manifest in ourselves.

Biblical Foundation

The Biblical foundation for this project is drawn from the Old Testament text, Gen. 1:26-28, and Matt. 28:18-20 in the New Testament. The book of Genesis is the first book of the Bible, offering the first signal of significance and direction as the book carries its readers through its pages. This is the book of first things through which we are introduced to the idea of creation, man, woman, sin, Sabbath, marriage, family, labor, civilization, culture, murder, sacrifice, race, languages, cities, and redemption. The common thread that runs through its pages is sewn in the words “genesis” and “generation”.

The Old Testament

Genesis is the Greek word meaning “origin” or “beginning”, and for that reason, this first book of the Bible was given the name. In reality, the first word in the original Hebrew text is *bereshit* and is translated “in the beginning”. When the Bible text was translated into Greek, in the version known to us as the *Septuagint*, the title was given the Greek equivalent to *bereshith* which is genesis. Genesis is thus the book of beginnings. Gen. 1:1-25 records the beginning of the universe and starts with the words, “In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the earth...”⁹⁰ The words, “Then God said let

⁹⁰Genesis 1:1 (King James Version).

us make man in our own image, in our likeness...”⁹¹ in Gen. 1:26 marks the beginning of the human race. With the introduction of the serpent, Gen. 3:1-7 marks the beginning of sin in the world of man, but right on the heel of man’s fall from grace. The beginning of the promise of redemption is established in Gen. 3:9-24, and the birth of Cain marks the beginning of family life as recorded in Gen. 4:1-15. Directly following that account, we find the beginning of manmade civilization in Gen. 4:16-9:29 as Cain is separated from his family because of his separation from God’s Will and His way in the murder of his brother Abel. Next, we find the beginning of the nations of the world in Genesis chapters 10-11, while chapters 11-50 record the beginning and establishment of the Hebrew people.

The Genesis text contains the first Divine words spoken to humankind framed in the very words that brought them into existence.

Then God said, let us make man in our own image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth and over all the creatures that move along the ground. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and God said to them, be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and every living thing that moves on the earth.⁹²

These words express the scope of God’s love for humankind, His purpose for them, and His plan for their existence on the earth upon which He placed them. The Eternal One uses a series of words that expresses one’s relationship to God as expressed in one’s relationship to all of his creation. The very first words of Gen. 1:26, “then God said,”

⁹¹Genesis 1:26 (King James Version).

⁹²Ibid., 1:26-28.

expresses the power of God that is expressed through His Word. The Apostle John says in the first chapter of his book: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him and without Him nothing was made that was made.”⁹³

The Greek word *logos* (Aramaic *Memra*, used as a designation of God in the Targums, i.e., Aramaic translations of the Old Testament) means (1) a thought or concept and (2) the expression or utterance of that thought.⁹⁴ Therefore, “let us make man” was the expressed utterance of the thoughts and intentions of God. The word “make” in the phrase “let us make” comes from the Hebrew word *asah* and means to bring into existence by shaping or changing material, to produce or cause to exist or happen. It can also mean “to cause to be”, to become or to convert from one state, condition or category to another. In other words, some work had to be done in order to make man in His (God’s) own image and likeness. Terence E. Fretheim in his introduction to the book of Genesis states:

Genesis is a book about beginnings, from the beginnings of the universe and various orderings of humankind to the beginnings of the people of Israel. It also witnesses to the beginning of God’s activity in the life of the world. But creation is more than chronology. Genesis stands at the beginning because creation is such a fundamental theological category for the rest of the canon. God’s continuing blessings and ordering work at every level is creational. Moreover, only in relationship to the creation can God’s subsequent actions in and through Israel be properly understood. The placement of creation demonstrates that God’s purposes with Israel are universal in scope. God’s work in redemption serves creation, the entire creation, since it reclaims a creation that labors

⁹³John 1:1-3 (New King James Version).

⁹⁴C. I. Scofield, ed., *The Scofield Study Bible, New King James Version* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1450.

under the deep and pervasive effects of sin. Even more, the canonical placement makes clear that God's redemptive work does not occur in a vacuum; it occurs in a context that has been shaped in decisive ways by the life giving, creative work of God.⁹⁵

Fretheim suggests that God's process of creation is not limited to what we see in Genesis but that the process that God introduces with his words in Genesis is the shaping of God's plan and God's purpose for the redemptive work that would become necessary after the fall of man. They also constitute a sharing of the exercise of power wherein the Almighty delegates authority to humanity to procreate. The command to be fruitful, to multiply, and to fill the earth empowers mankind to share in the creative process. Notice, if you will, that the power to propagate is given so that humans can bring forth offspring after their own kind. We often look at the text and confine the words "be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth" with solely the physical aspects of reproduction. However, we cannot fully understand the implications of these words without looking at the original creative process in Gen. 1:26. God says therein, "Let us make man in our own image, after our own likeness." The word *image* means a bodily form or concrete likeness, but it also implies the spiritual attributes of the physical body, according to the *Harper Collins Bible Dictionary*.⁹⁶ God, however, is Spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.⁹⁷ The image of God is different from a physical image. It deals with God's divine nature. In other words, God created man with a sense of divine identity. He created him with a sense of an inner divine power of communication that allows man to

⁹⁵Terrence E. Fretheim, *The New Interpreter's Bible. Vol. 1 The Book Of Genesis* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 321.

⁹⁶Achtemeier, 450.

⁹⁷John 4:24 (New King James Version).

communicate with God. The word *image* and *likeness* of God is further clarified in Ephesians 4:24: "... and that you put on the new man who was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness."⁹⁸ This means to be created in all perfection. The image functions to mirror God to the world and to be an extension of God so that the world through humankind might know God. Fretheim states:

The phrase "image of God" has been subject of much discussion over the centuries. This language occurs only in Genesis 1-11 (though implied elsewhere, e.g., Psalms 80). In describing the relationship between Adam and Seth (5:3; cf. 5:1; 9:6), the words image and likeness are reversed, suggesting that the second word dominates. In 1:26, likeness may specify the meaning more closely, so that image should not be construed in the sense of identity. Fundamentally, it means the pattern on which [human beings are] fashioned is to be sought outside the sphere of the created.⁹⁹

Therefore, when God declares in Gen. 1:28 to be fruitful, replenish the earth and fill it, he was to fill it with his own kind. His own kind was made in the image of God. Before its fall, humankind had the ability to replenish the earth with their own kind or with their own kind in the "image of God". Mankind at that time was in a state of innocence—without guilt or sin. They were in perfect agreement with God. "The image functions to mirror God to the world, to be God as God would be to the non-human, to be an extension of God's own dominion."¹⁰⁰ This is an example of true discipleship. True discipleship brings one into perfect agreement with God and establishes or re-establishes the mirror reflection or the image of God in us through spiritual growth.

⁹⁸Ephesians 4:24 (New King James Version).

⁹⁹Fretheim, 345.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

After the fall of humans, the command to “be fruitful and replenish and to fill the earth” took on a new flavor. Humans were now able to be fruitful physically but could not replenish or fill the earth with the image of God, because sin had marred the image of God in them. The command then encompasses the responsibility of humans to present the image of God to humankind so that the earth can be replenished with people who have been restored in the image of God.

Also in this creation story, we find God who is the creator and sustainer of all that exists, giving man dominion and the power to subdue or to bring into subjection everything that God created in this world. In Gen 1:26, we are introduced for the first time to the word “dominion” (“and let them have dominion over....”). A study of the words “have dominion” (*rada*) reveals that it must be understood in terms of care-giving, even nurturing, not exploitation. As the image of God, human beings should relate to the non-human as God relates to them. This idea belongs to the world of the ideal conceptions of royal responsibility (Ezekiel 34:1-4, Psalm 72:8-14) and centers on animals.¹⁰¹ In Gen. 1:28, we see that the word “dominion” is repeated, but this time it is preceded by the verb “subdue”. The command to “subdue the earth” (*kabas*) focuses on the earth, particularly cultivation (see Gen. 2:5, 15)—a difficult task in those days. While the verb may involve coercive aspects in inter-human relationships (see Num. 32:22, 29), no enemies are in view here.¹⁰² We understand that God knows the end from the beginning because he is omniscient, i.e., all knowing. He also says in Isa. 54:17: “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against

¹⁰¹Fretheim, 346.

¹⁰²Ibid.

thee in judgment thou shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.”¹⁰³

Remember Fretheim said “subdue” may involve coercive aspects in inter-human relations, but this author suggests that God knew from the beginning that man would be tempted by the devil through the serpent. He therefore gave him the power to subdue every living thing that moved upon the earth. When the serpent came to tempt Adam and Eve, they had the power to subdue his evil intentions, but they elected not to use the power God gave them.

Fretheim states that dominion must be understood in terms of care-giving. Most sources define “dominion” (*rada*) as rule, lordship, power, or authority, but the idea of caregiver hints at the place that stewardship has in the plan and intentions of God. Yes, humanity also rules over creation but under God (Gen. 1:26, 28, Ps. 8:6). Oppressive rule is condemned (Leviticus 25:43, 53, Matt. 20:25). Ultimate and eternal dominion over all things belong to God (Ps. 22:28; 145:13, Daniel 4:3, Revelation 1:6).¹⁰⁴ Man, therefore, has been delegated authority, power or dominion by God. God prepared him to be a responsible steward of God’s physical kingdom. Notice in Gen. 2:8: “And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.”¹⁰⁵ Now look at Gen. 2:15: “And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.”¹⁰⁶ Man’s dominion embraces a type of stewardship for

¹⁰³Isaiah 54:17 (King James Version).

¹⁰⁴Achtemeier, 245.

¹⁰⁵Genesis 2:8 (King James Version).

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 2:15.

God as the keeper or caretaker of God's earthly domain. By suppressing the intention or authority of God, Adam and Eve allowed Satan through the serpent to usurp that authority. Mankind lost his power of dominion and gave it to the prince of this world.

The Old Testament text establishes the purpose and intent of God for mankind. He wanted a people who were a reflection of His image and likeness in the realm that He had created for them. He, therefore, created man in His image and likeness. God created disciples who would listen to Him and follow Him. He then placed them in the Garden of Eden and gave them dominion and authority over every living creature. God told them to subdue it and rule over it. He made mankind stewards over His domain/His kingdom. The Old Testament shows that God's plan was to make disciples of mankind and make them stewards of His domain, allowing them to rule and subdue it using the authority delegated to them by God.

The New Testament

The command of Gen. 1:28 was restated in Matt. 28:18-20 after Christ made it possible for the image of God to be revived in us when he paid the sin debt with the blood atonement of his sacrificial death on Calvary. Jesus says:

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, all authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷Matthew 28:19-20 (New King James Version).

Dr. Terry Thomas in his book, *Becoming a Fruit-Bearing Disciple*, states that the mandate given by Jesus is commonly called the Great Commission. Dan B. Allender and Tremper Longman III states in their book, *Intimate Allies*, the Great Commission calls us to a life of evangelism and discipleship.¹⁰⁸ Claude Payne and Hamilton Beasley continue this line of thoughts in their book, *Reclaiming the Great Commission*, by saying “this command of Jesus is central to the life and work of the Christian church and to the Apostolic denominations.”¹⁰⁹ The reason for the declaration that Jesus has “all power” is clarified in chapter 1 of Acts where we find these words: “But ye shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses to me, in Jerusalem and in all of Judea, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”¹¹⁰ Matt. 28:18 and Acts 1:8 are considered to be the preamble to the Great Commission.¹¹¹ Jesus says: “All power is given to me in heaven and in earth.”¹¹² Now that should cause our inquisitive antennas to go up. All power is given to me. Well, God is already omnipotent or all powerful.

The Scripture says: “And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of mighty thundering, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.”¹¹³ The word “omnipotent” means all powerful, therefore God is all powerful. The Scripture goes on to elaborate on the relationship between God and Jesus by saying:

¹⁰⁸Thomas, 29.

¹⁰⁹Bishop Claude E. Payne and Hamilton Beasley, *Reclaiming The Great Commission: A Practical Model for Transforming Denominations and Congregations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 14.

¹¹⁰Acts 1:8 (New King James Version).

¹¹¹Richard R. De Ridder, *Disciplining The Nations* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975), 181.

¹¹²Matthew 28:18 (New King James Version).

¹¹³Revelation 19:6 (New King James Version).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”¹¹⁴ John 1:14 goes on to say: “And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” Jesus is the Word and the Word is God; therefore, He already has all power. There was, however, a dilemma: God had already given dominion over the earth to mankind. The Scripture says: “And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth, upon the earth.”¹¹⁵

Now, it is clear that after God made mankind in His own image, He blessed them and told them to subdue the earth and gave them dominion over the earth. “Dominion” means to have sovereign power or all power within the domain that God had placed them. God told Adam and Eve (man and woman) in Gen. 1:28 to subdue it and have dominion over every living thing that moves. “Subdue” comes from the Hebrew word *kabash* and means to put down, to humble or to conquer. Man had been given the power to conquer or to put down anything on earth that moves and would manifest itself against him. God gave them the power to be victorious in the domain that God had given him, but in chapter 3 of Genesis, the serpent (one of the living things that moved) approaches Adam and Eve with words of temptation, words designed to put a wedge between them and God. Now they had the power to subdue, to put down the words of the serpent, to conquer the temptation set before them, but they chose to give in to the wiles of the devil.

¹¹⁴John 1:1 (New King James Version).

¹¹⁵Genesis 1:28 (New King James Version).

Eve allowed the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life to lure her into a state of sin. The Scripture says:

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food (lust of the flesh) and that it was pleasant to the eyes (lust of the eye) and a tree to be desired to make one wise (pride of life), she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.¹¹⁶

The first Adam failed the test, but it did not surprise God or catch Him off guard. He had a plan because He recognized the end from the beginning. God put man out of the garden, out of the domain that he had created for him. Man lost his dominion and his power to subdue. But most importantly, he lost his relationship with God. He lost his birthright, if you will, and just like Esau, he sold it for something to eat. In God's eyes, man, like Esau, despised his birthright (see Gen. 25:34). Esau lost his birthright to the supplanter Jacob. Adam lost his birthright (dominion) to the supplanter Satan who used the serpent to deceive Adam and Eve.

Satan usurped man's dominion from him. He is the prince of the power of the air. The Scripture says: "In which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience."¹¹⁷ Satan has the power to deceive, but he deceives only those who cannot or will not resist him, using animals or men who are not willing to resist his wiles. The Scripture says: "Submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you."¹¹⁸ Have you ever noticed that people worship calves, elephants, snakes, water

¹¹⁶Genesis 3:6 (New King James Version).

¹¹⁷Ephesian 2:2 (New King James Version).

¹¹⁸James 4:7 (New King James Version).

buffalo, cows, etc.? Satan uses what he can, when he can, for what he plans. Do not let Satan use you!

Mankind was in a dilemma: no relationship with God, no power, no dominion, no way to get right with God, and no way to re-establish fellowship with Him. God, however, had a plan to take from the devil what he had stolen from the first Adam. God's plan was wrapped up in His Son. He wrapped him in flesh; sent Him down through forty-two generations, to be born of a virgin, to walk among sinners and yet he was sinless, and to die for our sins. He was the second Adam who came to reverse what the first Adam did. The Scripture clarifies the need and the purpose for the work that Jesus performed when He died for us with these words.

For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.¹¹⁹

Jesus came to restore our relationship with God, to pay the penalty for our transgressions and to bring the power needed to empower the disciples for the mission of Matt. 28:19. The Scripture says: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto

¹¹⁹Roman 3:113-17 (New King James Version).

me.”¹²⁰ The exultation of our Lord and Savior as authoritative ruler also establishes his kingdom which is the kingdom of our Lord and is realized in the Church. Richard De Ridder in his book, *Discipling the Nations*, suggests:

With the enthronement of Christ and His announcement of it to the disciple group the redemptive program of God entered a new age. The promulgation of the New Covenant for all nations revealed the new commission for God’s Apostles. Whereas formerly He dwelt among men in the form of a servant, having been made like unto us in all things, He will henceforth reign as Lord of lords and King of kings.¹²¹

Notice also in Matt. 28:19 that Jesus uses the same word used in Gen. 1:28—“make”—however, that word is prefixed by the words “go ye”. The Greek word for “go ye” is *poreuo* which means to pursue the journey on which one has entered or simply to continue one’s journey. Clearly, the main focus should not be on “go” but on the action verb “make”. Richard De Ridder says:

There has been and still is current a popular misrepresentation of this command of Christ. The emphasis is on the task of making disciples, for that is the primary verb.... What is tragic about the wrong emphasis so frequently attributed to the command of Christ is that the entire demand is isolated from the whole witness of the Bible, and going into “all the world” becomes the fulfillment of what Christ demands. Obviously not everyone can go into “all the world”, but each can start from where he is. Do you live in Jerusalem where Christ was rejected, or in Judea where he was crucified outside Jerusalem walls, or in Samaria where he was not wanted, or in some uttermost part of the world where he is not known? There disciples must be made for him.¹²²

¹²⁰John 12:31-32 (New King James Version).

¹²¹De Ridder, 180.

¹²²Ibid., 184.

The key for the command of Jesus in the Great Commission is “making” or the work that must be done to make disciples. We, as disciples, are commanded to pick up our cross and follow him, or to do the work that God intended for us to do in this domain. Therefore, “make disciples of all nations” remains the center and heart of covenant obedience. By it, the disciples displays that he lives under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.¹²³

In this periscope of Scripture, the Greek word for disciple is *matheteuo* which has two distinct meanings: (1) to be a disciple of one, to follow His precepts and instructions, and (2) to make a disciple, to teach and instruct them. In other words, in order to make disciples, you have to be a disciple or be the one upon which the discipleship is based. A disciple, according to *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, is not only a pupil but an adherent; hence they are spoken of as imitators of their teacher. They are those who believed upon him, confessed him and abide in his words. Larry W. Hurtado in his dissertation, *Jesus in the Gospel of Mark and Beyond*, states:

In Mark’s account, Jesus is both the basis for and the pattern of discipleship. His death is the salvific ransom (10:45), the covenant-making sacrifice (10:42), the index of commitment for his disciples (e.g., 18:34), and the servant pattern that they are to follow (10:43-45). In fact, Mark makes Jesus the only adequate model of discipleship.¹²⁴

A disciple, then, is one who has been changed into the likeness of the one upon which the discipleship is based, namely Jesus the Christ. Let me make it plain; a disciple is one who has been recreated or rebirth, (i.e., born again) in God’s own image and has

¹²³De Ridder, 185.

¹²⁴Richard N. Longenecker, ed., *Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William D. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 25.

become an imitator of Christ. The key word is “have become” or are in the process of being made into imitators of Christ.

The participles “baptizing” and “teaching” describe the method by which disciples are made. The believers are commissioned to make disciples by baptizing men and women and putting them under instructions.¹²⁵ “Baptize” comes from the Greek word *baptize* which means to dip, immerse, submerge, make clean, or to overwhelm. In other words, “baptism” is the overwhelming commitment to adhere to and follow the commandments of Christ. It is the affirmation of a covenant relationship between the one being baptized and the one in whose name they are being baptized. Baptism is the sign of consecration and discipleship in the New Covenant. Since covenant is a declaration of God’s Lordship, then the baptismal sign of entrance into it becomes a sign of coming under the jurisdiction of the covenant and particularly under the covenantal dominion of the Lord. Further confirmation for the covenant basis of baptism can be found in the meaning of the phrase “in/unto the name of the Triune God” which, from Old Testament analogies, signifies an authority or ownership relationship.¹²⁶ The rabbinic literature gives some examples illustrating the meaning of the phrase “into the name of”, and they will help us now to understand what that phrase meant in the time of Jesus.

1. Heathen slaves were compelled to receive baptism on their entry into a Jewish household and were to be baptized “in the name of slavery.” Similarly, when they were set free, they were to be immersed “in the name of freedom.” Such a baptism set the man in the relationship which was intended to invoke the

¹²⁵De Ridder, 190.

¹²⁶Ibid.

expected performance. The analogous thought in Christianity would be that being baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit sets the one baptized in a definite relationship to God. The Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit become to the baptized person what their name signifies.

2. Offerings were said to be made in the name of six things: In the name of the offering, the offerer, God, the alter fires, the sweet savor, and the good pleasure before God. This also defines the purpose one has in view. The offering was made with respect to its intention, for the benefit of the offerer, for the sake of God, with regard to the sacred fires that were properly kindled, e.g., in view of the sweet savor, and for the delight it yields to God. From this point of view, Christian baptism, if analogous, would take place for the sake of God, making the baptized person over to God.
3. An Israelite might circumcise a Samaritan, but a Samaritan might not circumcise an Israelite because Samaritans circumcise “in the name of Mount Gerizim,” i.e., with the obligation of venerating the God of the Samaritans who worshipped there.¹²⁷

Baptism is the sign of consecration and discipleship in the New Covenant. Its meaning is life—the new life—which has been made possible by their participation in the death and resurrection of Christ.¹²⁸

The next two words, “teaching them,” comes from the Greek word “*didasko*” which means to hold discourse with others in order to instruct (to teach), deliver didactic

¹²⁷De Ridder, 191.

¹²⁸Ibid., 190.

discourse (to preach) by imparting instructions, instill doctrine, to explain or expound a thing, or as Matt. 28:20 states “to observe all things whatsoever I (Christ, the one the discipleship is based upon) have commanded you.” Once the witness has been received and believed (reception by faith is implied in becoming a disciple), the recipient is brought under the promise and sanctions of the covenant through baptism and instructions.¹²⁹ But, what are we to teach them? Jesus declares “teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you....”¹³⁰ To fully understand Matt. 28:20, we have to digress to Matt. 28:18 where Jesus declares: “All authority is given me in heaven and on earth.”¹³¹ This verse is the key to understanding the things that Christ has commanded us to observe. The Greek word for “authority” is *exousia* which means the power of rule or government. It carries the connotation of having dominion.¹³² In order to have dominion, in order to rule, you have to have a domain or someplace to rule. Remember Adam and Eve were given dominion, and then they were placed in the Garden of Eden, a place to exercise their powers of dominion or rulership. Jesus declares in Matt. 28:18 that his domain is heaven and earth.

Matthew’s gospel is an exposition on the Kingdom of Heaven which is Jesus’ domain. In Matthew, John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, declares “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand”¹³³ John was declaring that a new kingdom was in the

¹²⁹De Ridder, 190.

¹³⁰Matthew 28:20 (New King James Version).

¹³¹Ibid., 28:18.

¹³²W. E. Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishing, 1961), 91.

¹³³Matthew 3:2 (New King James Version).

process of being interjected into the world, a new kingdom longed by the Jewish nation. In reality, John was announcing the advent of the new ruler of this new kingdom, Jesus Christ. Jesus, Himself, continues John's theme in the fourth chapter by literally repeating the same phrase "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."¹³⁴ Notice that the Scripture indicates from that time Jesus began to preach the kingdom in the same verse. It is in the light of this declaration of the kingdom being at hand that he called the first of his disciples saying, "follow me and I will make you fishers of men."¹³⁵

The kingdom theme is once again highlighted when his disciples ask him; "Why do you speak to them in parables?"¹³⁶ Jesus answers: "... because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given."¹³⁷ It is at this juncture in the Gospel according to Matthew that Jesus delivers the Kingdom parables. The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who sowed good seed.¹³⁸ The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed.¹³⁹ The Kingdom of Heaven is like leaven.¹⁴⁰ The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field¹⁴¹ The Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls.¹⁴² The Kingdom of Heaven is like a

¹³⁴Matthew 4:17 (New King James Version).

¹³⁵Ibid., 4:19.

¹³⁶Ibid., 13:10.

¹³⁷Ibid., 13:11.

¹³⁸Ibid., 13:24.

¹³⁹Ibid., 13:31.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., 13:33.

¹⁴¹Ibid., 13:44.

¹⁴²Ibid., 13:45.

dragnet.¹⁴³ Every one of the kingdom parables are about resources that have to be managed or kept. It is about things for which individuals have been given responsibility or have assumed responsibility. Robert S. Paul in his book, *The Church in Search of its Self*, declares:

The Church, however, has one distinct element in relation to ministry that is its own. That is its incorporateness, for in the church the meaning of our Lord's ministry is translated into terms of an on-going, living community. The church is therefore an essential link between our Lord's ministry and the realization of the kingdom, for the kingdom of God cannot be realized until it can be demonstrated that what Jesus brought to man can provide to this kind of new community: The *koinonia* of the New Testament church is the love of Christ expressed in the community.¹⁴⁴

In the 25th chapter of Matthew, Jesus gives the parable of the talents. This parable introduces a traveler that gives talents to his three servants according to their abilities. He made them stewards over his property in the form of talents. One was given five talents, another two talents, and the third one talent. Notice that the traveler rewarded his servants based on what they did with what had been given to them. It was not until the traveler returned and the assigned task had been completed that we hear the traveler declaring “well done, thou good and faithful servant”¹⁴⁵ to the servant who had done well. In like manner, the servant who had done nothing with what he had been given, heard “you wicked and lazy servant”.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³Matthew 13:47 (New King James Version).

¹⁴⁴Robert S. Paul, *The Church in Search of Its Self* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), 301.

¹⁴⁵Matthew 25:21 (New King James Version).

¹⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 25:26.

Jesus, in like manner as the master of the kingdom, with all authority in His hand has called us to discipleship. This discipleship involves training men and women to observe all things Jesus has commanded. The Greek word for “observe” is *tereo* and a better interpretation for that word is “keep” or “keeper”.¹⁴⁷ The Apostle Paul uses the same word *tereo* in 2 Timothy wherein he declares “I have fought the good fight, I have kept (*tereo*) the faith.” The keeper of the faith is a good steward much the same as the servants with the five and two talents were good stewards. A good steward is a manager of God’s estate or God’s domain. In the wider sense, the steward (*oikonomos*) is of a steward in general

(a) of preachers of the Gospel and teachers of the Word of God: “Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.”¹⁴⁸

(b) of elders or bishops in churches: “For a bishop must be blameless, as stewards of God, not self-willed...”¹⁴⁹

and

(c) of believers generally:¹⁵⁰ “As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”¹⁵¹

Discipleship is the process of becoming what God has already intended for us to be, good stewards over the domain or the areas that God has place us over. He commands

¹⁴⁷Vine, 627.

¹⁴⁸1 Corinthians 4:1 (New King James Version).

¹⁴⁹Titus 17 (New King James Version).

¹⁵⁰Vine, 1097.

¹⁵¹1 Peter 4:10 (New King James Version).

us to observe the kingdom principles by being good stewards of the things of God. We are called to be stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:1), and he has called us to be hospitable and to be commanded by Jesus to make disciples teaching them to observe (keep) all things to the end that they might become faithful stewards of the faith. That is discipleship with purpose.

The strength of these instructions of the Great Commission is found in the last sentence of Matt. 28:20 which states: “And, lo, I am with you always, (even) unto the end of the world.”¹⁵² Jesus declares in the Gospel according to John: “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness.”¹⁵³

The Scriptures go on to say in Acts 1:8: “... but you shall receive power when the Holy has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth”. Jesus is with us through the indwelling Spirit of God, and He, The Holy Spirit, brings us the power of Christ into our lives so that we can observe all things that He has commanded us. Eugene Peterson quoted in Dr. Terry Thomas’ book, *Becoming a Fruit-Bearing Disciple*:

Disciple (*mathetes*,) says we are people who spend our lives apprenticed to our master Jesus. We are in a growing, learning relationship, always. A disciple is a learner, not in the academic setting of a school room, but rather at the work site of a craftsman. We do not acquire information about God but skills in faith.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵²Matthew 28:20 (New King James Version).

¹⁵³John 16:7-8 (New King James Version).

¹⁵⁴Thomas, 61.

Bishop Payne and Dr. Beasley declare: “Every Christian is a disciple in progress who participates in a process from which no one graduates. Each new spiritual discovery leads to another discovery, each quickening of the soul to a greater quickening, each joy to a greater joy.”¹⁵⁵

This Biblical foundation has sought to illuminate the Great Commission as a pre-ordained principle of God’s plan for mankind. This plan (displayed in the Old Testament and revealed in the New Testament) is for mankind to be in relationship with God as his disciples and to be developed into good stewards over the domain that God has entrusted to us. He has provided the authority, the power, the plan, and the instructions for success in Matt. 28:16-20, and we are mandated as born-again believers to walk therein.

Theological Foundation

Theology in simple terms is the study of God or the science of God. It is derived from two Greek words, *theos* and *logos*, the former meaning “God” and the latter “word,” “discourse,” and “doctrine.”¹⁵⁶ It is the compilation of those ideas and thoughts that flood our minds as we study and become acquainted with the story of the Bible. It is man’s attempt to understand who God is and why God acts the way he acts. God wants mankind

¹⁵⁵Payne and Beasley, 125.

¹⁵⁶Henry C. Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), 1.

to know Him and to understand Him because He loves us. That is why He says in His Word, “Try me and see if I’m not God” and “O taste and see that the Lord is God.”¹⁵⁷

In our attempts to know or understand God, we base our understanding on how we think God responds to us through the lenses of our circumstances. Many times our view, because it is an Anthropological or human view (giving the attributes of man to God) or a finite view of an infinitive and spiritual God, is distorted. That is why the Scripture plainly states that “for my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.”¹⁵⁸ This author is glad that we can know God’s ways and His thoughts because He reveals Himself to us in the midst of our circumstances, through his Word. That is why God, who is beyond our understanding, can say through the Scripture, “Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus.”¹⁵⁹ The word of God exposes the mind of Christ to us, and the Spirit of God reveals the meaning of those things to which we have been exposed. Owen Thomas in collaboration with Ellen Wondra states: “The Christian gospel and the Christian faith are based on these stories, and Christian theology attempts to understand and interpret these stories of what God has done and is doing.”¹⁶⁰ In other words, theology comes from our interpretation of what comes out of the mouth of God. It is our understanding of what God is saying to us through His word. It is the methodical investigation and interpretation of the content of Christian faith, the orderly clarification and explanation of what the Christian message affirms. It is faith seeking

¹⁵⁷Psalm 34:8 (King James Version).

¹⁵⁸Isaiah 55:8 (King James Version).

¹⁵⁹Philippians 2:5 (King James Version).

¹⁶⁰Thomas and Wondra, 1.

understanding or faith seeking the clarity of its cause. That is, it is a reflection on Christian life amid struggles for freedom or liberation.¹⁶¹

Many Christians have lived in a state of theological expression without ever hearing a theological concept. They have just lived and applied their Biblical understanding to the situations and circumstances of their lives. They cannot articulate it, but they live it. Theology moves us to think systematically about the nature of our faith, our spirituality, religion and our God-human connection. This is why theology is said to be systematic and constructive.¹⁶² Theology articulates what they have lived in accordance with what the Word of God expresses. But, in contrast, there are many Christians who are “tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine....”¹⁶³ because the message of the church sometimes becomes unintelligible to the contemporary age. Therefore, the task of theology is to test, criticize, and revise the language that the church uses about God. It tests this language by its norms, namely God’s self-disclosure, to which the Bible gives testimony.¹⁶⁴

Theology should be considered in its relation to philosophies such as Idealism, Naturalism, Process Philosophy, and so forth. Such study demonstrates relationship

¹⁶¹Thomas and Wondra, 1.

¹⁶²Dwight N. Hopkins, *Head and Heart: Black Theology—Past, Present, and Future* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 8.

¹⁶³Ephesians 4:14 (King James Version).

¹⁶⁴Thomas and Wondra, 1.

among different world views, some of which overlap, some of which are similar, and some of which are contradictory.¹⁶⁵

The theological foundation for the ministry focus of this project will be concentrated in Liberation Theology and Process Theology. This author chose Liberation Theology because it addresses the problem with traditional Christian ethics, which is not only that the black situation or the situation of people of color has never been taken into account, but that the ethics arrived was based on a theology that did not in any way recognize the God of the oppressed. Therefore, it was inadequately equipped to deal with the realities of oppression and liberation.¹⁶⁶ Discipleship deals with the process of developing stewards of the faith to join God in His activity for liberation. Cone knows that reconciliation is “the work of God in which Jesus becomes Christ,” but this reconciliatory work of Christ involves a gathering of those who are committed to obedience in the world. Consequently, there is a close relationship between reconciliation and liberation. Unless the hungry are fed, the sick are healed, and justice is given to the poor, there can be no reconciliation. That is why Cone believes that, just as for Jesus, reconciliation for man can be no easy, cheap thing. It is costly.¹⁶⁷ Because the love of God is a divine activity, to love thy neighbor means to join God in his activity to liberate the oppressed. God’s love for people of color means that he has given them

¹⁶⁵Jay McDaniel and Donna Bowman, eds., *Handbook of Process Theology* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2006), 6.

¹⁶⁶Allen Aubrey Boesak, *Farewell to Innocence: A Socio-Ethical Study on Black Theology and Power* (Maryknoll: Orbis Press, 1977), 124.

¹⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 127.

“somebodyness,” the power “to become”. By accepting the truth of this new image of themselves revealed in Jesus Christ, black people respond to God’s love.¹⁶⁸

In conjunction with Liberation Theology, this author chose Process Theology because it complements Liberation Theology in that it expresses the “power to become”. Process Theology is acknowledgement that contemporary understanding of God and God’s expression through creation, including human beings, are always in “process” and never complete.¹⁶⁹ That is to say that Process Theology is unlike traditional theologies in that it is not static. The idea that our understanding of God should be “the same yesterday, today, and forever” is thus rejected in Process theology. It recognizes that our understanding of truth, especially as it relates to concepts of God and human beings, is in need of progressive growth. It embraces the idea that the best of human nature is continually being nudged in the direction of growth and improvement.¹⁷⁰

The focus paper, *Developing Stewards of the Faith to Empower the Community through Faith: Discipleship with Purpose*, will seek to transform the way people respond to their Christian faith through preaching liberation. Liberation preaching is transformational preaching, with “transformational” means that the condition of one’s mental and physical existence has been altered.¹⁷¹ Liberation Theology demands that there be a transformation in consciousness and mentality. The Bible supports this idea of

¹⁶⁸Boesak, 125.

¹⁶⁹Vernon G. Goff, *Making God Talk Make Sense: A Common Sense Approach to Religion* (Lincoln: Dageforde Publishing, 2001), 282.

¹⁷⁰Ibid., 282.

¹⁷¹James Harris, *Preaching Liberation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press.1995), 8.

transformation in the statement of Paul: “And be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is good and is the acceptable will of God.”¹⁷² Discipleship is the process of being transformed so we might walk in that good and perfect Will of God.

This view then informs our Christological purpose as a self-critical practice of following in the way of Christ’s own prophetic ministry.¹⁷³ Note what is said in the Gospel of Matthew, when Jesus is confronted for eating with publicans and sinners: “But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but the sinner to repentance.”¹⁷⁴ Juan Segundo suggests that the church exist, not so much as a vehicle of salvation and care for a privileged few, but rather, to make a contribution to the world, to the ecclesial way of living the love of which is common to all men of good will.¹⁷⁵

We often look at Liberation Theology as a new form of political expression that is seeking a change in the plight of men. In that way, it is the main intent of Liberation Theology in the context of this ministry focus to not change the basic assumptions of Christianity but to recover (“back to basics”) what is truly essential in what has somehow become distorted or obscured. Christopher Rowland, in his introduction to the theology of Liberation stated:

¹⁷²Roman 12:2 (New King James Version).

¹⁷³Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.1985), 245.

¹⁷⁴Matthew 9:12-13 (King James Version).

¹⁷⁵Erickson, 266.

Liberation theology is being worked out in shanty towns, land struggles, oppressed and humiliated groups, as well as areas of urban deprivation in the Northern hemisphere, wherever the rebuilding of shattered lives takes place. The point is well made by John Sabrino who has for years worked in war-torn Central America. He suggests that the agenda of European theology has been more interested in thinking about and explaining the truth of Faith, whereas for Liberation theologians faith runs parallel to real life and is in dialectical relationship with it, thereby the meaning of faith and doctrine is illuminated at the same time as the world's wretched conditions is confronted and alleviated. Commitment to the poor becomes the context of reflection, and so practical discipleship becomes the dynamic within which theological understanding takes place."¹⁷⁶

Liberation Theology stems from the oppression and injustice that have condoned the inhuman treatment of people of color in the name of Christianity. From 1619 to 1865, the period of slavery in the United States, religious whites used Christianity to justify the dehumanization of black people in chattel and to bolster anti-black racism. In other words, Christianity was white supremacy.¹⁷⁷ Although by the 19th century, slaves worshiped in white churches, plantation chapels, or independent black churches, they also met secretly, in a way evocative of their African origins.¹⁷⁸ A proto-theology of liberation was expressed at many of these meetings, and "the slaves' religious principles," explains James Blassingame, "were colored by a longing for freedom... heaviest emphasis... was on change in the earthly situation and divine retribution for the cruelty of their masters."¹⁷⁹ The significance of slave religion for African American theologians is also

¹⁷⁶Christopher Rowland, *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 3.

¹⁷⁷Hopkins, 7.

¹⁷⁸Ibid., 9.

¹⁷⁹Ibid.

expressed in James Cone's statement: "In one sense black theology is as old as the first African's refusal to accept slavery as consistent with religion" (Wilmore and Cone, 353).¹⁸⁰ One of the most amazing things about the God of liberation is His ability to take the source of oppression and condemnation and turn it around for the liberation of the oppressed. The inhuman treatment of blacks in the name of Christianity should have turned them against it, but based on their memory of West African ways of being equal creatures before their High God and the stories of God's deliverance of the enslaved Israelites from Egyptian bondage, Africans and African Americans re-interpreted Christianity as a champion of oppressed sections of society.¹⁸¹ According to Josiah Young,

Afro-American theologians claim their work is a continuation of a Christian tradition that emerged within the context of slavery.... Slaves were proselytized by missionaries who were aided by laws that saw no incompatibility between Christianity and slavery. During the course of two great revivals—The Great Awakenings—black and white protestant clergymen found slaves more receptive to an Armenian, emotional, evangelical preaching. By the 19th century, Christianity had spread substantially among the slaves.¹⁸²

Although the fields were ripe for Liberation Theology in the post-antebellum era of America, the historical roots of Liberation Theology are to be found in the prophetic tradition of evangelist and missionaries from the earliest colonial days in Latin America.

¹⁸⁰Hopkins, 9.

¹⁸¹Ibid., 7.

¹⁸²Josiah U. Young, *Black and African Theologies: Siblings or Distant Cousins?* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1986), 8.

The first theological reflections that lead to Liberation Theology had their origins in a context of dialogue between a church and a society in ferment, between Christian faith and the longings for transformation and liberation arising from the people. The second Vatican Council produced a theological atmosphere that encouraged freedom of creativity. This inspired the Latin American theologians to think for themselves about pastoral problems affecting their countries. It also inspired frequent meetings between Catholic (Gustavo Gutierrez, Segundo Galilea, Juan Luis Segundo, Lucio Gera, and others) and Protestant (Emilio Castro, Julio de Santa Ana, Rubem Alves, and Jose Miguez Bonino) theologians leading to intensified reflection on the relationship between faith and poverty, the gospel and social justice, and the like.¹⁸³ At a meeting of Latin American theologians held in Petropolis, Rio de Janeiro in March 1964, Gustavo Gutierrez described theology as a critical reflection on praxis. This line of thought was further developed at meetings in Havana, Bogota, and Cuernavaca in June and July of 1965.¹⁸⁴ These meetings were a part of the preparatory work leading up to the Medellin Conference of 1968. Lectures given by Gustavo Gutierrez (in Montreal, 1967) and Chimbote (in Peru) on the poverty of the Third World and the challenge it posed to the development of a pastoral strategy of liberation were a further powerful impetus toward a theology of liberation.¹⁸⁵ The first Catholic congresses devoted to Liberation Theology were held in Bogota in March 1970 and July 1971. On the Protestant side, the Church and

¹⁸³Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1987), 69.

¹⁸⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵*Ibid.*

Society in Latin America (“ISAL”) organized something similar in Buenos Aires in 1971.¹⁸⁶

Boff suggests that there were four stages of development for Liberation Theology in Latin America. The first stage, the foundational stage, was the literary documentation that sketched out the general outline of the movement and presented Liberation Theology as a sort of fundamental theology. Some of the most influential works promoting Liberation Theology in Latin America were Gustavo Gutierrez’s *Teologia de la Liberacion* (1971), Juan Luis Segund’s *De la Sociedad a la Teologia* (1970) and *Liberacion de la Teologia* (1973), Hugo Assmann’s *Teologia Desde la Praxis de Liberacion* (1973), and Lucio Gera’s *Apuntes para Una Interpretacion de la Iglesia Argentina* (1970) and *Teologia de la Liberacion* (1973).¹⁸⁷

On the Protestant side, Rubem Alves wrote *Religion: Opium of the People or Instrument of Liberation* (1969) and Jose Miguez Bonino wrote *La Fe en Busca de Eficacia* (1967) and *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* (1975).¹⁸⁸

The second stage of developing Liberation Theology established doctrinal content for this approach. The three areas that received the most attention were spirituality, Christology, and ecclesiology—which all corresponded to the most urgent needs in the life of the church.

The third stage realized that if Liberation Theology was to become firmly established, there needed to be a firm epistemological basis in order to avoid duplication

¹⁸⁶Boff and Boff, 70.

¹⁸⁷Ibid.

¹⁸⁸Ibid., 71.

and confusion of language. There needed to be a coherent expression to the themes arising from original spiritual experience.¹⁸⁹ This phase began to link theology with practice.

The last stage, the formalization stage, involved the training of pastoral workers. To this end, some one hundred Catholic theologians (with ecumenical contacts and Protestant collaborators) planned a series of fifty-five volumes under the heading *Theology and Liberation*, with the Portuguese and Spanish versions published in late 1985. Translations into other languages are also planned.¹⁹⁰

It is interesting to note that in order to recover what is truly essential in our faith, it is imperative that our focus be on the true focal point of our faith. Thorwald Lorenzen states:

The resurrection of Christ is therefore intimately interwoven with the divine promise that God's justice will triumph over the estranging and exploiting forces of death. It alone issues the promise that ultimately the oppressors will not "triumph over innocent victims". This is the important thrust of Moltmann's understanding of the resurrection. Against "Liberal" Theologians, he insists that in the resurrection something happened to Jesus himself. In dialogue with "Evangelical" theologians, he argues that the resurrection of Jesus is part of God's passion for justice; and against the "Traditional" rationalistic theologians, he maintains that the risen Christ can only be known by people who are willing to follow him.¹⁹¹

Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his classic book, *The Cost of Discipleship*, gives an interesting analogy on Moltmann's understanding of the resurrection in light of Liberal,

¹⁸⁹Boff and Boff, 72.

¹⁹⁰Ibid., 73.

¹⁹¹Thorwald Lorenzen, *Resurrection and Discipleship Interpretive Models, Biblical Reflections, Theological Consequences* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books. 1995), 93.

Evangelical, and Traditional theologians. He states that “cheap grace is the deadly enemy of the church.”¹⁹² He then goes on to elaborate on a description of cheap grace: “Cheap grace is preaching forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession....¹⁹³ And then to bring it all together and to put it all into focus, he adds; “Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.”¹⁹⁴

In comparison, Dr. Bonhoeffer lifts up costly grace as the only alternative to cheap grace. He says:

Costly grace confronts us as a gracious call to follow Jesus; it comes as a word of forgiveness to the broken spirit and the contrite heart. Grace is costly because it compels a man to submit to the yoke of Christ and follow him, it's grace because Jesus says: “my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”¹⁹⁵

The yoke of Christ can be interpreted as “the making of a disciple” because it implies that the recipient of the yoke will grow in understanding and knowledge of who Christ really is. The Scripture in this context says: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me [a disciple is one being taught]; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”¹⁹⁶ Yoke comes from the Greek word *zugos* meaning “of any burden” or “bondage”. It is derived from the root word *zeugnumi* which means to join together. The yoke is an instrument used to join together

¹⁹²Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Touchstone Press, 1959), 43.

¹⁹³*Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁹⁴*Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶Matthew 11:29-30 (King James Version).

beast of burden (e.g., oxen) to make the task of pulling easier. Discipleship joins the believers into a relationship wherein Christ can trust them with stewardship over the things of God.

Liberation Theology is the process of reviving costly grace. The process of requiring humankind to be accountable, not only to themselves but to the community that surrounds them. Accountability is the connection between discipleship and stewardship. A disciple has to be a good steward because he is accountable for how he operates in the realm of faith. Edward Antonio, in his dissertation on Black theology states:

But to speak of Christ as the representative of the oppressed because He himself knew what oppression was, is in fact to comprehend his Christological significance through the symbol of blackness, for as we have already had occasion to observe, blackness itself has historically been a symbol of oppression. Thus, the Christological question and its significance for blacks, as well as the experience of faith which evokes it in the first place, are rooted in the reality of this symbol; in the concreteness of the social context of black existence (the context of racism, slavery and rejection). The existence of this “situation” is the basis for the need to recast the issue of Christology. It is not enough merely to appropriate the Biblical witness as to who Christ was, for we cannot be satisfied simply with repeating Scripture; we need to ask who Christ is for us today. We must continually move from the identity of Christ then, to his identity now, and back again without undermining either pole. In order for the pendulum to swing in this way, Cone proposes three stages necessary for the process: (1) Scripture, the primary, transcendent “other” source, (2) tradition, the mediating link, and (3) the social context of black people.¹⁹⁷

Black Theology, a pioneering Liberation Theology indigenous to the United States, started in the global context of a shift in world order, particularly after World War II. A combination of international and domestic factors came together to provide the

¹⁹⁷Christopher Rowland, ed., *The Cambridge Companion To Liberation Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 82.

backdrop for the origin of Black Theology in mid-1960.¹⁹⁸ In the 1960s and 1970s, Black Theology centered the concept of liberation within religious and theological dialogue. This language developed directly out of the national liberation speeches and slogans of Third World nations, both non-aligned and socialist, as they called for national independence against (white) colonial powers.¹⁹⁹ Similarly, Black Theology was the first religious movement to clearly equate Jesus Christ with the liberation of the oppressed in North America in the struggle against (white) domestic power.²⁰⁰

Black Theology of Liberation is the name given to a movement created by a group of African American pastors in the late 1960s who felt that the Gospel of Jesus Christ had a positive message for black people, despite the negative racial conditions they faced.²⁰¹ Although the ministers of the National Committee of Negro Churchmen were the first group to give a religious interpretation of the black power movement in 1966, it was James H. Cone, an ordained African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) minister and professor, who wrote the first book on Black Theology. In that work, *Black Theology and Black Power* (1969), and in his second book, *A Black Theology of Liberation* (1970), Cone redirected the entire course of religious thinking in the United States.²⁰²

¹⁹⁸Hopkins, 8.

¹⁹⁹Ibid., 13.

²⁰⁰Ibid.

²⁰¹Ibid., 14.

²⁰²Ibid., 14-15.

Theologically, Black Theology of Liberation states that God created this world for all humanity.²⁰³

Liberation Theology's major focus is the liberation of the oppressed, reversing the inhuman treatment of people of color, relief for the disenfranchised, and justice for those that have been unjustly treated. But, even more than that, it is about changing the mindset of the oppressor by the using liberating power of Jesus Christ. Power! Liberation Theology is about power. Power belongs to the very essence of humanity, in the very center of our creaturely relatedness to God. In the Biblical foundation of this author's writings we addressed the fact that we (humankind) were created in the "image" and "likeness" of God. The Hebrew word *demuth* (likeness) does not allude to any kind of physical likeness but rather, describes our unique relationship to God. The term *zelem* (image) is not a morphological but rather, a functional dynamic expression. According to A. Kruyswijk, this expression conveys that human beings are in the image of God by virtue of the divine power granted to us by God.²⁰⁴ Because human power is grounded in the power of God, it must reflect the character of the divine power to be genuine. God's power is a liberating power, and it is this "full authority" that God has endowed humanity.²⁰⁵

Liberation Theology is an expression in the process of developing stewards of the faith through the discipleship process. The ability to share in power, through discipleship and stewardship, enables human beings to become subject to their humanity, to assume

²⁰³Hopkins, 16.

²⁰⁴Boesak, 50.

²⁰⁵Ibid., 51.

responsibility, to act responsibly, and in acting to realize their own being and that of others.²⁰⁶ Liberation Theology then helps us to open our understanding of discipleship and stewardship because in it we are empowered to be reshaped and reformed in the likeness of God. We are no longer the tail but the head, no longer beneath but above. It shows us that power seen as service is meaningful only in light of God's gift and can only mean realizing one's humanity—as much as God's gift has affirmed it—in liberating people to be truly human, in making the world, not a chaotic but meaningful, place to live.

Liberation Theology is very easily constructed in process thought because there is a relational character to the divine which allows God to experience both the joy and suffering of humanity. God suffers just as those who experience oppression, and He seeks to actualize all positive and beautiful potentials. God must, therefore, be in solidarity with the oppressed and must do work for liberation. Process Theology presumes that God is present in the lives of all people and shares in the suffering and joys of all people.²⁰⁷

Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947) is the intellectual father of Process thought. He was a mathematician and philosopher, and his study of science convinced him that existing philosophical systems were inadequate to describe the essentially relational character of all reality.²⁰⁸ This revelation led him to develop what he called the “Philosophy of Organism”. During his time at Harvard which began in 1924, Whitehead

²⁰⁶Boesak, 51.

²⁰⁷Jay McDaniel and Donna Bowman, ed., *Handbook of Process Theology* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2006), 9.

²⁰⁸McDaniel and Bowman, 4.

was assisted by Charles Hartshorne. It was while teaching at the University of Chicago in 1928 that Hartshorne worked on the development of a Whiteheadian metaphysical system, with special attention to its implications for theology.²⁰⁹ An influential group of students and scholars embraced his ideas along with the ideas of Whitehead, and Process Theology took hold and grew until the 1960s. Some of the persons involved were Henry Nelson Wieman, Bernard Loomer, Daniel Day Williams, and Bernard Meland.²¹⁰

John B. Cobb, Jr. studied with Hartshorne at the University of Chicago, and his book, *A Christian Natural Theology Based on The Thoughts of Alfred North Whitehead* (1965) became the pre-eminent systematic exposition on Process Theology in the late '60s.²¹¹

Process Theology makes a dual effort to bring the “below” of Natural Theology and the “above” of Revelation into communication. For example, the Process system sketches a God of infinite relationality (“love”) who was a primordial purpose for all reality, a purpose in which God is in the midst of creativity bringing about.²¹² Walter Lowe speaking with regards to Process Theology says, “The entire cosmos is conceived as a complex of future-oriented events which are drawn into creative purpose by the lure of the divine Logos.”²¹³ The liberation of oppressed and marginalized people is always in view of and prepared for divine intervention. In other words, human activity, when

²⁰⁹McDaniel and Bowman, 4.

²¹⁰Ibid.

²¹¹Ibid., 4-5.

²¹²Ibid., 15.

²¹³Peter C. Hodgson and Robert H. King, eds., *Christian Theology: An Introduction to the Traditions and Tasks* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 243.

properly understood, does not exclude divine initiative, divine initiative, and/or divine activity; properly understood it is persuasive and never coercive.²¹⁴ God does not make us follow a course of action but continually coaxes or persuades us into a place receptive to Divine intervention.

Alfred North Whitehead argues that God must be thought as being more dynamic and in a way more consistent with a social conception of reality. Rather than suppose that God is “above all” and totally unaffected by what is going on in the world, we should presume that God is the most affected being in the universe, the one who experiences everything.²¹⁵ The Scripture expresses this same view in Philippians 2:6-8:

Who, being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God; But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.²¹⁶

John Cobb states that Jesus, without in anyway ceasing to be human, participated in that one structure of existence in which the self is co constituted by the presence of God.²¹⁷ God is an active participant in the affairs of men. He cares about the oppressed and cares about the marginalized. Julian A Hartt suggests that creativity itself is an all-pervasive factor in reality. So what God supplies to the world is not energy or being, but aim and relative order. God participates in the life of every being, great and small. God’s

²¹⁴Hodgson and King, 243.

²¹⁵Ibid.

²¹⁶Philippians 2:6-8 (King James Version).

²¹⁷Hodgson and King, 243.

caring is inexhaustibly resourceful as well as infinitely tender.²¹⁸ Hartshorne calls his viewpoint “panentheism” to distinguish it from “theism” which puts God wholly outside the world and from “pantheism” which identifies God with the world. Therefore, he presumes that God is the most affected being in the universe, the one who experiences everything.²¹⁹

While this author has adopted and embraced some of the view points of the philosophical and theological precepts of both Process Theology and Liberation Theology, it does not mean or insinuate that this author unequivocally accepts or endorses all of the tenants and views of their school of thought. Even though we are always in the process of learning more about God, we will not fully know him until we are translated into his presence on the last day. The Scripture says: “For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.”²²⁰

The writer in this ministry focus sought to encourage that metamorphic process of change that will encourage Sunday-go-to-meeting Christians to be changed or transformed into everyday-every minute active Disciples of Christ who would create an atmosphere of change in the local community.

²¹⁸Hodgson and King, 160.

²¹⁹Ibid., 23.

²²⁰I Corinthians 13:12 (King James Version).

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this project involved the selection of eight members of this author's context of ministry (the New St. Thomas Baptist Church family) to participate in the project. To represent a cross-section of the church, the participants were selected from various age groups and educational levels.

A pre-test was designed and administered to assess the level of understanding and knowledge of the relationship between discipleship and stewardship as a means of personal development in Christ Jesus. After the pretest, a series of four sermons were delivered, framed from Ephesians 4:7-16, to establish a reference level of the participants' basic understanding of discipleship and stewardship. The sermons were delivered on four consecutive Sundays and designed to whet the appetite of the parishioners in an effort to inspire them to study to show themselves approved, workmen and workwomen that need not be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth¹. Bible studies were prepared and shared on each Wednesday night following the sermons to reflect and elaborate on the sermonic themes. The participants agreed to be present at church services and Bible studies for the designated period.

The first sermon was taken from Ephesians 4:1-8. This sermon was designed to explore the source of discipleship. Where did the idea of discipleship begin and for what purpose was it designed? We explored the revelation that discipleship is not man's plan

¹2 Timothy 2:15.

to grow the church, but it is and always has been God's design to establish his earthly family through grace. Next, we explored the fact that disciples were called to follow, or to emulate, and be like Jesus. A disciple, therefore, is someone who has or is in the process of being fundamentally changed in every aspect of their lives. This change comes from the relationship established by God and is perfected as we walk in his will and his way. The disciples' job or vocation is to live worthy of God who is calling every disciple into his kingdom through grace. Grace is God's design, therefore discipleship which is based on grace is God's design.

The first Bible study continued in the vein of the first sermon and connected the power mentioned in the beginning of the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18 to the term "dominion" found in Genesis 1:28. It expounds upon the fact that mankind gave up the dominion that God gave to him in the Garden of Eden when he disobeyed God, but goes on to express how Jesus through obedience to God regained all power.

The second sermon was developed from Ephesians 4:9-10 and centers around the power of discipleship or "fill me till I want no more". Discipleship is God's plan, therefore He is the one that provides the power "to become" as Process theologians put it. He fills us with His spirit so that we can apply His word to our lives for our development. The word of God is the power food that equips us for discipleship. We have to understand that Jesus as the Word of God and Jesus As the bread of life is the perfect disciple-maker, who supplies sustenance for strength as the disciple travels along this journey. This sermon deals also with the twelve Apostles or should I say the eleven apostles that were lost disciples after the crucifixion of Christ but yet, were empowered when they were filled on Pentecost. Paul, likewise, received power after he was filled by

the Holy Spirit. The second Bible study continues the theme of power from above.

The main thought of this study was to show that in order to be a disciple you have to be led by the Spirit of God and in order to make disciples you have to rely on that same Spirit. This Bible study also dealt with the dominion usurped by the devil but restored in Christ.

The third sermon entitled, “The Purpose of Discipleship: It’s All About Him,” comes from Ephesians 4:11-12. The idea of the sermon is to establish the fact that discipleship is God’s plan to bring His purpose into our lives. That purpose is to restore our relationship with Him. This sermon touched on three goals for the making of a disciple: (1) to bring the disciple to the place where God wants them to be, (2) to provide practical service for the work of the ministry and (3) to encourage the edification of the body of Christ.

The third Bible study lifts up Jesus as the pattern for discipleship as noted in Mark 10:45 and recognizes him as the salvific ransom for mankind’s sin. It encourages us to follow His lead as shared in Mark 10:43-44 “...but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.” He is our Lord and has the right to exercise lordship over us, and as our Lord, he supplies all of our needs. Because he is our source and supplier, everything belongs to him, and we as disciples are just stewards of His domain.

The fourth and last sermon of the series explores Ephesians 4:13-16 while developing the theme “The Results of Discipleship: The Image Revealed”. Discipleship helps us to follow the mandate of Phillipians 3:4, “to press towards the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, until we come to the unity of the faith and of

the knowledge of the Son of God to a perfect man” (John 15:13). In this sermon we look at perfection in three stages: (1) Positional Perfection, (2) Relative Perfection and (3) Ultimate Perfection which is the results of discipleship.

This last Bible study session looks at discipleship from the vantage point of Matthew 16:24, “If any man will come after me let him deny himself, pick up his cross and follow me.” It is a continuation of the third Bible study.

Please note that only the first and second Bible studies are posted in the appendix. Due to time constraints the second Bible study session was a continuation of the first lesson, and the fourth Bible study was a continuation of the second lesson. Following the Bible studies and the series of sermons, a post-test was administered to develop a comparative analysis of the change in responses, if any. The post-test was identical to the pre-test for these comparative purposes. The pre- and post-test consisted of twenty questions that explored the focal groups understanding of discipleship. The questions were designed as multiple choice questions to establish the level of agreement or disagreement with the statement. The participants could by selecting (a) agree, (b) strongly agree, (c) not sure, (d) disagree or select (e) strongly disagree. Using this method we could determine not only their position on the statement but how strongly they agreed or disagreed. It is important from this author’s point of view that the congregants should be steadfast in what they believe.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

This chapter will discuss the results of the methodology expressed in Chapter Four. The pre- and post-test were the primary vehicles used to analyze the cognitive understanding and attitudinal changes that occurred, if any, after the sermonic presentations, and Bible studies were applied in the context of this author. This author used the Likert Scale to formulate the pre- and post-test, which consisted of “agree,” “strongly agree,” “not sure,” “disagree,” and “strongly disagree” ratings, to establish a measurable degree of differences in the responses. The pre-test was administered to eight selected church members who represented a cross-section of the church. The questionnaire, results, and analysis of the pre- and post-test are as follows.

The first statement sets the tempo for the study and states: *All Christians are called to be disciples*. This research shows that while the majority of the participants are in agreement with this position, there are some significant changes after the treatment. Although there is a 12.5% decrease in those who “agree” that *all Christians are called to be disciples*, there was a 25% increase in those who “strongly agree” and 0% in those who “disagree”.

The pre-test for the second research question showed that 87% of the focus group “disagree” with the statement that *you must be called into the ministry to be a disciple*. The post-test, however, shows a complete reversal of their opinions, with 100% agreeing of which 50% “strongly agreed”.

Research question #3 stated: *You have to have seminary or some professional theological training to be a disciple*. It was one of the questions not affected by the sermons or by Bible study because the participants were secure in their view of this principle.

While the results for research question #4 show that 75% of the focal group does not believe that the *pastor or some licensed minister is the only one that can train disciples*, 12.5% believe it to be true (“agree”) and 12.5% were “not sure”. While there was a decrease of 12.5% of those who “disagree”, post-test results indicate a 25% increase in those who “strongly disagree”, yielding a total change of 12.5% in those who “disagree”. We note, however, that 12.5% of the respondents continue to hold their belief that disciple training is the responsibility of the minister.

Research question #5 stated: *When Jesus said, “Go ye into all the world and make disciples...,” he was speaking only to the disciples who walked with him during his earthly ministry*. Participant responses did not show any significant change in pre-test (87.5% “disagree”) and post-test (87.5% “disagree”) results. Note, however, 12.5% of the respondents continue to hold their belief concerning Jesus ministry.

Research question #6 reveals that 25% of the pre-test focal group was “not sure” that *conversion is the central element in discipleship*. However, after the study period there was a 12.5% increase in those who “agree” and 12.5% increase in those who “strongly agree” that *conversion is the central element in discipleship*.

Research question #7 shows a significant change in percentage in what this author considers to be changes in a positive direction. In the post-test, only 37.5% of the respondents “agree” that *to be a good disciple you have to be a good steward* (a decrease

of 37.5% from pre-test results). This negative “agree” decrease appears to be an appositive increase, as there is a 50% increase in those who “strongly agree” and none who “disagree”.

Research question #8 which stated *good stewardship only deals with being faithful in our monetary, i.e. tithes and offerings*, leaves this author with additional questions. There is a 12.5% decrease in persons who “disagree” with the statement concerning stewardship, 12.5% are now “not sure” what they believe, and 12.5% “strongly agree” that stewardship is a money-thing only. This is defiantly food for thought for future study.

Research question #9 (*Discipleship can only be accomplished during the times you are witnessing to others*) only changes the intensity of the disagreement: 12.5% who “disagree” on the pre-test now “strongly disagree” on the post-test. All of the focal group respondents disagree with the statement in some form.

When the study group was confronted with research question #10 (*Stewardship and evangelism are both components of discipleship*), we found the Bible study and sermons had a profound effect on the results of this question. The pre-test shows 37.5% (25% “disagree” and 12.5% “strongly disagree”) disagree with the hypothesis that stewardship and evangelism are mandatory components of discipleship. Another 37.5% were “not sure”.

After the sermons and Bible study, an additional 50% “agree” as opposed to pre-test results, and another 25% “strongly agree”. There was a total change of 75% from those who were either “not sure”, “disagree”, or “strongly disagree” on the pre-test to 0% in those three categories on the post-test.

Research question #11 addresses the misconception that *discipleship and church membership are the same*. The pre-test shows that 12.5% of the respondents “agree” that *discipleship and church membership are the same*, and 87.5% “disagree”. After the sermons and Bible study, the post-test indicates that the percentage of respondents who “disagree” increased by 25% and those who “strongly disagree” decreased by 12.5%. All respondents “disagree” on the post-test in some manner.

Research question #12 (*If you do not love your father and mother more than Jesus, you are not worthy to be a disciple*) shows a 25% reduction in those who “strongly disagree” and an increase of 12.5% in those who “disagree”. Initially, 12.5% were “not sure”, but on the post-test 25% “agree” with the statement.

It is believed that the play on words may have confused some of the respondents. This researcher led a group discussion about this and other questionable answers at the conclusion of the post-test.

On the pre-test, research question #13 solicits positive responses (67.5% “agree” and 25% “strongly agree”) with the statement that *there are three necessities needed for becoming a disciple of Christ: self-denial, picking up your cross daily and following Christ*, while 12.5% were “not sure” of what they believed. The post-test, while showing a 12.5% decrease in those who “agree”, indicates a 25% increase in “strongly agree” answers. All respondents (100%) on the post-test “agree” with the statement in some manner.

Research question #14, *You have to obey Christ in everything in order to be a good disciple*, indicates a decrease in the “agree” responses by 25%, while the “strongly

agree” responses increased by 25%. This implies that the focal group increased their intensity of this belief.

Research question #15 has 12.5% of the respondents “strongly agreeing” with the statement, *disciples are born not made*, and another 12.5% “not sure” on the pre-test. The remaining 75% were evenly divided between the “disagree” and the “strongly disagree” response. After the sermons and Bible study, the respondents who “disagree” increased by 25% while the “strongly disagree” respondents remained constant. All focal group members (100%) “disagree” with the statement that *disciples are born and not made*.

Research question 16 (*A disciple should know the Bible well enough, through study, to fight temptation and to resist the philosophies of the world*) saw no changes in the response of the focal group. They all “agree” in some manner with the statement.

Responses to research question #17 (*a disciple is obedient to the commands of Christ because they love Him*) show a decrease in the “strongly agree” responses of 12.5% and an increase of 12.5% in the “not sure” column. This change in responses requires some special attention to ensure the question is understood by all.

Responses to question #18 (*a disciple should bear fruit*) show a positively “agree” response by 75% of the respondents. There is 12.5%, however, who “strongly disagree” and another 12.5% who are “not sure”. The post-test reveals a 62.5% increase in the respondents who “agree”, while those who “strongly agree” remain the same. All agreed that *disciples should bear fruit*.

Research question #19 found 12.5% of the participants “not sure” on the pre-test, while 87.5% “agree” with the statement that a *fruit-bearing disciple glorifies God*.

Post-test results show an increase in the percentage of respondents who “agree” by 12.5%, bringing 100% of the group into agreement in some manner.

The last research question (*Love is the motivation behind discipleship*) finds 100% of the respondents “agreeing” on the pre-test. The post-test, however, reveals a 50% decrease in “strongly agree” responses, a 37.5% increase in “agree” responses, and a 12.5% increase in “strongly disagree” responses.

The results of the pre-test and the post-test show that there were significant attitudinal changes in 14 of the 20 questions, namely questions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17 and 18. These attitudinal changes have had a profound effect on the participants in the project and have increased their awareness and desire to not only be disciples but to make disciples through evangelism, stewardship and living the life that Christ intended for his servant/family to live.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTIONS, SUMMARY, AND CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of this project went very well. The people selected to participate in the project were very receptive and really applied themselves to the lessons and sermons that were rendered during this period. It would have been wonderful if the project could have been extended for a longer period of time to include some practical applications of things that we learned in this process. While there are on-going projects at our locale context to enhance the use of this material, time restraints did not allow it to be included in this body of work.

The purpose of this project is to empower the members of the New St. Thomas Baptist Church to affect change in our local community by developing stewards of the faith through the Discipleship process. During the course of this project, this author was intrigued by the revelation that discipleship is the means by which stewards of the faith are established. The Christian church has been given the responsibility to care for this worldly domain that has been entrusted to us as children of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. God's people do not have the same dominion given to us through the first Adam in the garden, but God has made us stewards of the kingdom that he has given to his Son, the second Adam, Jesus Christ. This project is designed to wake up the sleeping giant in us, so that we can manifest in our own lives the revived image of God. Thus, by walking in the likeness of Christ we can reclaim, replenish, and restore the boundaries of God by subduing the powers of this world through our relationship with Christ who is the author and finisher of our faith.

This project is effective within the limited parameters established. The focal group that was involved in the project grew by leaps and bounds in their understanding of God's intent and purpose for their lives as it relates to discipleship and stewardship. This author notices significant attitudinal change among the focal group as to their view of stewardship. One of the biggest hurdles to overcome is the fact that discipleship included not only evangelism but stewardship as well. Seventy-five percent (75%) of the focal group did not agree or were unsure. After the treatment (i.e., sermons and Bible study), the entire group (100%) understood that stewardship is part of discipleship.

According to the pre- and post-test results, seventy percent (70%) of the questions led to a better understanding of discipleship. The Bible says in Hosea 4:6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...."¹ I praise God for a people who are willing to study "to show themselves approved unto God, workmen that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."²

One of the most disturbing barriers to faithful service that discipleship fosters is our lack of understanding about ministry. Many believing saints believe that only ministers or preachers are called into ministry. A major focus of this research project is the fostering of the understanding that all of us, who have been called out of the world into a relationship with Jesus Christ, have been called into His ministry. The call to discipleship is a call into the ministry of Jesus. Every disciple in the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, who was called and selected by Him, was called into His ministry. We too—not just the preacher—have been called into His ministry. The pre-test discovered that 87.5%

¹Hosea 4:6 (King James Version).

²2 Tim. 2:15 (King James Version).

of the respondents did not understand that the call into the ministry of Jesus Christ was a necessary ingredient of being called into discipleship. They believed that being called into ministry meant being called to preach. The post-test shows that the entire 87.5% changed their view, and all (100%) respondents understand that we all are called into the ministry of Jesus Christ. That revelation alone was the icing on the cake for this author.

This author has learned that by equipping the saints of God with the God's plan for their lives, the power of their lives will spill over into the community. This process, however, takes total commitment on the part of the leaders and the people of God to actively work towards the discipleship model. This model will produce Christian men and women who are willing to embrace the mantle of stewardship and become responsible handlers of the mandates of Jesus Christ. This mantle of stewardship will inspire us to "go into all the world" and make disciples as we follow the mandate of Christ to be witnesses in Jerusalem first and then to the rest of the world.

The members of New St. Thomas have experienced spiritual growth because of their commitment to discipleship. The development of an intercessory prayer group (The Intercessory Fellow Group, or "IF" group) that meets every Sunday morning, one hour prior to Sunday school, to seek God's face for the church has blessed the church to be even stronger in their commitment to Christ.

All in all, this author believes the project is successful, although time constraints did not allow us to accomplish everything we had planned. The Bible studies, for example, originally consisted of four independent studies. However, due to time constraints the first Bible study, *Discipleship: All Power*, could not be finished during the

first session and was therefore completed on week #2. The Bible study started in the subsequent third week was not completed until the fourth week. Hence, only two Bible studies are listed in the appendix. This author suggests for future projects that time should be allotted for the two additional studies. The third Bible study focuses on “Stewardship: A Biblical Concept” and the fourth on “The Marriage of Discipleship and Stewardship”. God, however, has blessed the effort, and I hope that this project will inspire other theological students to research and develop the relationship between discipleship and stewardship further.

APPENDIX A.
SERMONS

The Source of Discipleship: God's Design

Ephesians 4:1-16 (verse 1-8)

This morning I want to draw your attention to two words: disciple and discipleship. As we consider these words, a question comes to mind. What is a disciple? Now, for most of us, when we think about disciples we think about the twelve disciples who were called by Jesus during his three-year ministry. It is interesting to note that of the twelve, eleven after being trained by Jesus, became Apostles.

In the previous statements, there are some key words that will help us as we attempt to come up with a definition of disciple: (1) they were called, and (2) they were being trained to become. Remember that.

The encyclopedia tells us that “disciple” means a “learner”, therefore, if you are under the tutelage of someone—learning a skill or a trade—you are considered to be their disciple. The twelve disciples, then, were in training under Jesus, learning to do and to act like Jesus. They, in fact, had the corner on discipleship, or did they? Well, as we examine the New Testament, Luke, in the tenth chapter of his Gospel, writes about the seventy disciples that Jesus sent out two-by-two. Remember, he told them to carry no purse/no script and to carry only one coat. He gave them power to heal the sick and to cast out demons. Now besides that, there were 120 from which they selected one to replace Judas (Acts 1:15). Therefore, the disciples were not limited to the original twelve, and all of them were learning, all of them were being trained—not to be like the Apostles who were over them but to be like Jesus—and all of them were called.

Now if I were to ask “how many of you are called?” Most of you would answer with an emphatic “yes”. But, if I were to ask you, called to what? Most of you would answer that you were called to be a Christian.

I want you to understand this morning that Peter, James and John were not called to be Christians. As a matter of fact, none of the disciples were called to be Christians. “Christian” is a name that was given to the followers of Christ in Antioch because they acted and talked like Jesus. The original twelve, the seventy, the 120, and all of the other saints who were followers of Jesus were called to be disciples. A disciple, then, acts differently from the way the world acts.

John 13:34-35 puts it like this: “I give you a new commandment that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” So, when we think of discipleship or doing what disciples do, we need to think of a term used to refer to a disciple’s transformation from some world view or practice of life to that life view or practice of Jesus Christ. Paul put it like this: “Be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is that good and acceptable and perfect Will of God” (Romans 12:2).

A disciple, then, is not just someone who learns or someone who knows or someone who accumulates information, or someone who changes moral behavior based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. A disciple is someone who makes a fundamental change in their whole lifestyle to mirror the lifestyle of the Christ. In other words, we become imitators of Christ. So, the call or to be called by Jesus is to be called into fellowship with Him. It is in the fellowship, you see, that we have access to the intimate things of God

that enhances our transformation. Therefore, if we are called into fellowship, discipleship takes on a new flavor. When Simon, Peter and Andrew were called in Matthew 4:18-20, they immediately left their nets, left their livelihood, left their family, left their way of life, because they desired to walk in fellowship with Jesus. It was more than just training for a new occupation. They went where Jesus went, they slept where Jesus slept, they ate what Jesus ate, and they experienced, to some extent, what Jesus experienced. They were in complete fellowship with Him. They had to leave their will and their purpose at home, on the boat, with the net, because they were called according to His purpose. Rom. 8:28 says: “And we know that all things work together for the good of those who love God and to those who are the called, according to His purpose.” Now we’re getting the picture.

Discipleship is walking in the purpose of God. We have been called to more than church membership, we have been called to more than just name bearers or Christians, we have been called into fellowship with Christ. And the only way we can walk in fellowship with Jesus is by becoming a disciple and having an intimate relationship with Him.

There is a caveat to this “called” thing, because as I look around I see many folks who are called but who are still lacking a meaningful relationship with the Lord. Oh, church service is on their list of things to do—they want to hear about Jesus, and they want fellowship with Jesus’ people—but only on their terms and at the time and place of their choosing. Matt. 20:16 declares: “So the last shall be first and the first shall be last: for many be called, but few chosen.”

I want you to understand, therefore, that the source of discipleship is God. It is not based on man's design or on man's plan. It is based on God's plan and God's design. God's design for mankind always begins with grace. Discipleship is the means by which God's purpose is unfolded to the church through His grace. In Ephesians 4:7, the Word declares: "But unto every one of us...." If we look back at Eph. 4:1, we understand to whom Paul refers. He says, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." The "every one" in Eph. 4:7, then, is talking about those who are called. We have already established that disciples are called, and if called we ought to walk worthy of the vocation in which we were called.

Well, if you are a disciple of Christ, what is your vocation? Our vocation is to live lives worthy of God who is calling us daily into His kingdom and glory (1 Thessalonians 2:12). Paul says in Eph. 4:7 to *every one of us* called to be a disciple, whose vocation or job is to live lives worthy of God who is calling us daily into his kingdom and glory, *is given grace*.

Grace is God's design, and God's purpose made manifest in our lives by the work that Jesus completed on Calvary's cross, that nullified all the plans and purposes of satan to separate us from the plan and purposes of God. The verse goes on to say that *every one of us* is given grace (God's design), according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Fellowship with God is based on God's knowledge of us and our willingness to know Him. God already knows our limitations, and He knows what we need even before we know we need it. He also knows how much we can bear; that's why He comforts us in 1 Corinthians 10:13 with these words: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man, but God is faithful, He will not suffer you to be tempted above that you

are able and will with the temptation also provide a way of escape.” So, God knows our measure. He knows the capacity of our vessel. He knows the extent of our determination. He knows the limit of our understanding. In other words, He knows what suits our case.

He provides individualized, hands-on attention. But, He will not overstep or override the boundary of free will. Therefore, in our fellowship and in our discipleship, God provides everything we need through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let me tell you there is no lack in him. There is nothing that He cannot provide. He provides what we need according to the measure of the gift of Christ. As we, then, draw near to Him, He draws near to us. The more we seek Him, the more He reveals himself to us.

The Power of Discipleship: Fill Me Till I Want No More

Ephesians 4:1-16 (verses 9-10)

On this second day of our journey into discipleship, we focus our attention on the power of discipleship. I want you to understand this morning that if anything, any process, any new way of walking, is going to be profitable to us and to God, it has to be inspired by God. 2 Timothy 3:16 says: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for instruction in righteousness. That the man or woman of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

The Word of God is profitable. Why? Well, it is profitable because it is powerful and can do what it claims to do. The writer of Hebrew declares, “for the word of God [Scripture] is quick [living] and powerful and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing

even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” Therefore, if discipleship is going to be profitable, it has to have power. But the question is where does this power come from and how can we get it so that we can use it to make our relationship to God profitable and meaningful.

The first thing I want you to understand is that a disciple is someone who is being trained by someone else who has already mastered the trade or the art or the practice in which you want to become involved. In other words, the master or trainer is teaching you, as a disciple, what he already knows. The disciple is, in fact, following in the teacher’s footsteps. If you are a disciple of a carpenter (like Jesus was under his earthly father Joseph), you are training, or being a disciple, to become a carpenter. If your master or teacher is an electrician, then you are training to become an electrician. If you are a sitting deacon-or a deacon in training, then you will hopefully be ordained as a deacon when your training is completed.

A good disciple learns the trade of his trainer and many times picks up the habits and unique style of the one that is over him. Now in the earthly realm, power to perform comes from the experience you receive while working with your master, your trainer, your mentor, etc. So I asked myself: “Self, who would be a good example for us to model if we want to be powerful disciples?” Well, most logically and naturally, we would look to the first disciples—the twelve upon whom Jesus himself called. But when we look at the twelve who were in the daily presence of the master, they were being trained day-in and day-out. They experienced all the works and miracles that Jesus performed. They were in perfect position to become perfect disciples, but after three years of seeing

through the eyes of Jesus, three years of walking where Jesus walked, still one disciple betrayed Him. One still denied Him, still one doubted him, and after His death, all but one deserted Him.

Where was the power? Well, when we look at them closely, we find that as long as Jesus was with them, everything was okay. As long as Jesus was with them, they had what they needed because Jesus was their power, Jesus was their strength, and Jesus was everything that they needed. He was the source of their strength, and he supplied everything they needed while he was with them. But when he died on Calvary's cross—when he was not physically there to minister to them, when he was absent—the source of their power was absent. They had no one to depend on, no one to lean on, and no one to call on. So, they were on the verge of giving up, on the verge of calling it quits. They went back home—went back to the sea, went back to their nets, back to their old livelihoods. Hence, discipleship needs more than a human mentor, more than a human trainer, more than a physical presence. It was not until the Holy Spirit filled them that they received power to walk as the disciples that Jesus had prepared them to be.

“Fill me, Lord; fill me till I want no more.” So, the twelve were examples but not the greatest examples. I turned my attention to Paul. Now, Paul was a disciple in a unique way. He never walked in the physical presence of the Lord while He was on his earthly three-year ministry. Paul is somewhat like you and me; he accepted Jesus as his Messiah. But, even though he accepted the Lord, there was nothing he could do for the Lord because he was powerless. He had no power. As a matter of fact, he was blind—could not see—and had no direction for his life. He wanted to go, wanted to be, but could not see where or what to do.

That is just like us when we come to the Lord. We have accepted Him as our Lord and Savior, but we do not have a clue of what to do or where to go. We cannot see and so we just wait for light and direction. Well, Paul waited on a street called Straight, and the Lord sent a man by the name of Ananias who declared unto Paul “the Lord, even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightiest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost.” Immediately the scales fell from his eyes, and Paul received his sight and was baptized. Now Acts 9:20 says: “Straightway he preached Christ,” however, in Galatians 1:16-17, Paul says, “When I was converted, I conferred not with flesh and blood—but went into Arabia for three years and was disciple by the Holy Spirit before returning to Damascus.”

The twelve received power for True Discipleship when they were filled. Paul received sight and power when he was filled. There is something powerful about being filled.

Let’s look at the periapt of Scripture:

Wherefore He [talking about Jesus] said—when ascended up on high—when He had conquered the death of Golgotha’s Tree—when He had taken the sting out of death and removed victory from the grave—when he had done all that God required of him, He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men.

Here, Paul uses the example of a conquering king. When an earthly king is victorious in battle, he brings marches his chained captives and bands of prisoners through the streets to demonstrate his conquering power. It is the conqueror who receives gifts. Paul speaks of Jesus as the conquering king, but instead of receiving gifts, He gives gifts. You see in the Old Testament that the conquering king demanded gifts, but in the New Testament, the conquering Christ gave gifts.

What is this gift? Paul says I do not want you to be confused because this Jesus that ascended into Glory is the same Jesus that descended first into the lower parts of the earth. You see Jesus could not make a promise of power until he fulfilled His promise of deliverance. He could not empower the saints of the New Covenant until He set free the saints of old. He went down into Hades, took the keys of death and the grave, and set all the Old Testament saints free. Then with all power in His hands, He ascended far above all heavens—that is, the natural heavens—far above space as we know it. God’s heaven is far above these heavens that He spoke into existence—that he might fill all things.

The twelve disciples received power when they were filled. Paul received power when he was filled. Jesus ascended that he might fill all things.

To “fill” means to make full, to cure, to abound, or to furnish or supply liberally. It also means to complete, to fill to the top, so that nothing shall be wanting. It brings the level of what we need to full measure, filling it to the brim.

It also means to consummate, to make complete in every aspect, to make perfect. It means to carry your thoughts to the end, whatsoever things be true, think on these things.

It also means to bring to realization a saying, a promise, a prophesy; and it causes us to obey God’s Will to its fullest.

So, the Power of Discipleship is to be filled with Jesus, to be filled by the Holy Ghost because Jesus is the master. That is why He says: “You are my disciples.” He does not say apostle disciples, evangelist disciples, teacher’s disciples but Disciples of Christ—and while he does use these offices for the perfection of the saints and the work

of ministry—it is Jesus that fills you, and it is Jesus that says He will never leave you. When the preacher is gone, He is with you. When the apostle is gone, He is with you. When the evangelist has left to evangelize, He is still with you. When the teacher has stopped teaching, Jesus is still with you to help in times of trouble.

Jesus will keep on filling you as long as you want to be filled. He will fill you to overflowing and still teach you more when you are his disciple. Only you have the power to stop him from filling you. He will fill you until you want no more. But as for me, I just want more and more and more.

The Purpose of Discipleship: It's All About Him

Ephesians 4:1-16 (verses 11-12)

This month our sermonic focus is on discipleship. To bring into focus our understanding of the Great Commission, Matt. 28:19-20 states: “Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you and know that I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

We should not only understand it but practice it. Do what God would have us to do. During the first week, we focused on the *source of disciple—the gift of grace*. You need to understand that grace was not consequential grace; it was intentional. Grace, you see, is not happenstance; grace is planned by God. It is not God's reaction to our failure; it is God's action to perfect His plan for us.

The next week we focused on the *power of discipleship—“Fill me till I want no more”*, and we understand that the power source is God. We receive God's power when

we are filled by the Holy Spirit. Now I want you to know that it is not the tank, it is what is in the tank. That's what separates the saints from the ain'ts.

But today we focus on discipleship, and you need to understand—right up front—it is all about Him. It is God's plan to bring to pass God's purpose.

Well, what is God's purpose for our lives? Paul declares in 2 Cor. 6:16: "For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said; 'I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people'." Sounds familiar, does it not? God had fellowship with Adam in the garden before the fall. God made man to propagate his image, for man was made in the image of God. Now when the image is marred, we lose fellowship with the father. Remember when Adam sinned, he was put out of the Garden. God still talked to Adam, but there was no fellowship because the relationship was strained.

God's purpose then is to restore our relationship with Him. Paul said he reconciled to God. How? In 2 Cor. 5:21, he says: "God made Him [talking about Jesus] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." Righteousness comes when the sin debt is paid. Jesus paid the price so our relationship with God, the Father, could be restored. Restored relationship leads to renewed fellowship. So God's purpose for us is satisfied when our relationship with God is restored.

Well, it would seem so, but I want you to understand that it is not just about us. It is about Him. Paul declares in 1 Tim. 2:3-4: "This is good and pleases God, our Savior, who wants all men to be saved or when our relationship with God is restored." God's

plan for our lives is to have fellowship with Him and to follow His mandate in Matt.

28:19-20 (“to go and make disciples”).

Now it would seem that if we are saved—and I believe we are—and if we are in a relationship with God—and I believe we are—then we should, first of all, enjoy our fellowship with Him or at least have some fellowship with Him. Secondly, we should be excited about telling somebody about Jesus and showing them Jesus through the way we walk and the way we act, because it is all about Him.

What we fail to understand is that we can be saved, have our relationship with God restored and still not be in fellowship with the Lord. The Bible says in Eph. 2:6: “... and God raises us up and with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms of Christ Jesus.” In other words, when we are saved and complete in Christ, every promise, every blessing, every hope is complete in the heavenly realm or in the spiritual realm of God. But, we are still in the earthly realm while we are in the flesh.

You see God sees us as we will be, as we should be, but while we are in the flesh we have to work out our soul salvation. We have to work to bring the flesh into subjection to the spirit. Paul says there is a war raging in our members. So every day we have to press towards the mark of the prize—the high calling of God in Christ Jesus—and because God knows us better than we know ourselves He left us some instructions on how to work it out, how to press towards that mark. We have to get busy for the Lord. We have to step out on faith, begin to study, and show ourselves approved. We have to be workmen who need not be ashamed—by rightly dividing the word of truth. You see before you can make a disciple, you have to be a disciple. You see discipleship puts a luster or a shine on the image of God of whom we were made in

likeness. So our pericopy of Scripture says: “It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists and some to be pastors and teachers.”

In other words, He provided us with what we needed to become good disciples. I want you to understand that we are not the apostles’ disciples, we are not the prophets’ disciples, we are not the evangelists’ disciples, we are not the pastors’ and teachers’ disciples, because if we were, we could only be as good or as bad as they, and they, like us, are in the same boat. For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. But, Jesus said “You are my disciples.” That is why Paul declared, “follow me as I follow Christ. Do not look at me, look at Christ in me because *it is all about Him.*”

So to make a disciple you have to let the disciple—the image of the living God expressed through the Holy Ghost—be in you. The Bible says “let your light shine, so shine before men that they might see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”

The apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers need to provide three things for the Disciples of Christ. First, they are for the perfecting of the saints so that you and I can be fully equipped. The Greek word used for “perfecting” or “equipping” is the same word used in surgery for setting a broken bone or for putting a joint back in place, so the word implies that we are being reset in line with the Will and the way of God through study. In politics, it is used for bringing together opposing factions so that governments can work together. It is the process of reconciling the flesh and the spirit. So the basic idea of the word is to put a thing back into the condition in which it ought to be.

The first goal of being disciple is to personally bring us to the place where God wants us to be. We have to renew our minds. The Word says: “Let this mind be in you

that was also in Christ Jesus.” Our thinking has to change before our action can change. We have to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto Him, which is our reasonable service. *It’s all about Him.*

Second, the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers need to provide for practical service or “for the work of the ministry”. The work of the ministry is the “go and make” part. It is the putting your hand to the grind stone or your foot to the pedal. It is taking your personal growth and sharing it with us. It is the process of strengthening the church and loosening the fabric of the church. It is to never make trouble but to see that trouble never rears its head.

Third, the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers need to provide for “... the edifying of the body of Christ”, i.e., united services. Discipleship inspires us to be on one accord, to walk in unity with the spirit, to lift up rather than to pull down, to encourage rather than to discourage.

Discipleship helps us to understand where we are in the body of Christ, and our sole purpose is to glorify God because *it is all about Him.*

The Results of Discipleship: The Image Revealed

Ephesians 4:1-16 (verse 13-16)

The Great Commission of Matt. 28:19-20 (“... to go and make disciples of all nations and teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you or that Jesus had commanded you....”) is Christ’s way of telling his disciples to do what God in the beginning of time had commanded mankind (through Adam) to do: to fill the earth with the image of God and to restore a sinful man to His likeness, fellowship and dominion.

This is the plan of God as revealed in Genesis 1:27-28, when God created man in his image and commanded him to be fruitful and multiply and to fill the earth and have dominion.

Now I want you to understand this morning that God never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Therefore, discipleship is God's plan for our lives to bring us into the fullness of His purpose for our lives by moving us from where we are to the place where He preordained or established for us to be. God has provided the means to equip the saints for the work of the ministry and for the edifying of the body of Christ (which is the church). The means towards achieving those goals were apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers—people who have gone through the process of becoming Disciples for Christ by submitting to the Will of God, by accepting the call of God and following the lead of the Holy Spirit—so that we—you and I—might come into the *unity of the faith*.

When I think about the unity of faith, I immediately think about the upper room experience of the Disciples in Acts 2:1: “When the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.” Now I want you to understand that these Disciples were in unity—they were of one accord, they were in harmony one with another. But it does not mean that they were in unity of the faith. Oh, they knew that Jesus had something special for them. They knew that they were going to receive some new direction in their life, but they did not understand what it would be or how it would come.

You see men can be in unity and be unified for the wrong purpose. They can be of one accord but still be headed in the wrong direction. The Disciples in the upper room

needed someone or something to bring their unity and their togetherness into the direction that God wanted them to go. They needed someone to compile all of the things they had seen and heard, and as yet, did not fully understand to bring the pieces of the puzzle together. They need to understand that the focus would not just be on one another but on the plan of God for each and every one of them. They were of one accord with each other, but God wanted their togetherness to be channeled through him. In Acts 2:2, it says: "... and there came suddenly from Heaven [unity of faith] is not an earthly process—it comes not by man or through man [it comes straight from Heaven]." It was as of a mighty rushing wind [the ruah of God], the same wind, the same breath that was breathed into man in Gen. 2:7 ("and man became a living soul"), and it filled the whole house. In Acts 2:4, it says "... and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit...."

Now I want you to understand that before you can walk in God's purpose to fill the earth with his image, you have to be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. For, it is the filling of the Holy Spirit that brings us into the unity of the faith. The Disciples needed the Holy Spirit to fill them with power, so the unity of the faith could come. You see they all began to speak in other tongues—different tongues, though they all spoke the same thing.

Well, pastor, what did they speak? They spoke about the knowledge of the Son of God. The Bible says that when the Holy Spirit comes, he will lead us all into truth, everything about the truth. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man comes to the Father but by me." The Holy Spirit gives us a clear picture of truth. Somebody said "What is truth?" John in 1 John 5:6 says: "This is he who came by water

and blood—Jesus Christ—not only by water but by water and blood, and it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is Truth.”

So it is *unity of faith* and the *knowledge of the Son of God* that will bring us to the results of true discipleship. John 5:13 says: “*Till we come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to a perfect man.*” In other words, when we press towards the mark of the prize—the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:14)—we are pressing towards perfection. Paul, however, makes it clear in Phil. 3:12: “...not that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.”

So, the word “perfection” or “perfect” does not refer to sinless perfection when referring to men. As a matter of fact, the Bible says “All have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God.” The Old Testament characters used to describe “perfect” or “blameless” were not sinless. So when we speak about perfection, there are three stages of perfection according to the Bible.

1. *Positional perfection* is the perfection that every born-again believer possesses when he accepts Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. It is a spiritual perfection. In Hebrew 10:14, the Bible says, “... for by one offering he has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.”
2. *Relative perfection* equals spiritual maturity. It is a maturity that is received progressively; we have to work towards soul salvation every day. Paul declares in 2 Cor. 7:1, “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” We have to work it out, but Paul says the working it out

part is made possible through God. He says in Heb. 13:20-21, “Now may the God of Peace ... make you complete in every good work to do His will working in you what is well, pleasing in His sight.”

3. *Ultimate perfection* is perfection in soul, body, and spirit and will only be realized at the time of the resurrection of the body—when we all shall be changed, when these fleshly bodies will be made new, when we are changed from mortal to immortal. So through discipleship we are striving towards perfection. We have *positional perfection*, and one day we will have *ultimate perfection*. But, while we are in the flesh in between *positional and ultimate perfection*, we have to work towards *relative perfection* and work on our spiritual walk every day.

That is discipleship, and we work not to what men call perfection but move towards the *measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ*. In other words, as we submit to God through discipleship, we allow God to fill us with His image and He stamps us with His likeness. His image and likeness are only found in the measure of the stature—not in his height, not in his weight, not in his hair color or texture, not in his skin color or his eye color—but the measure of the stature and the fullness of Christ. He fills us with the fullness of Christ so that we can fill the earth with His fullness. God wants us to be filled with His image, so that His image can be revealed to the world. He wants us to fill the world with His image, but we cannot fill the world until we ourselves are filled. Fill my cup, Lord;-fill me up, Lord.

APPENDIX B.
BIBLE STUDIES

Matthew 28:18-20

Discipleship: All Power

And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Most of the time when we talk about discipleship and the Great Commission, we begin our discussion or our lesson with Matt. 28:19 which begins with the word “go”. But, before we can “go”, before we can walk in the plan of the Great Commission, we have to understand the source and the power of the command “go”.

Jesus says in Matt. 28:18 that “All power is given to me in heaven and in earth.” Now that should cause our inquisitive antennas to go up. “All power is given to me.” Well, God is already omnipotent or all powerful.

Revelation 19:6 says: “And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of mighty thundering, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.”

Jesus is God. John 1:1 says: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” John 1:14 continues: “And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Jesus is the Word. The Word is God, therefore, He already has all power. But, how many of you know that from the very beginning God had a plan. God says in Jeremiah 29:11: “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord,

thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” God knows our end from the beginning, therefore, we have to go back to the beginning to understand verse 18 of Matthew 28.

Genesis 1:28 states: “And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth, upon the earth.” Now, I want you to understand that after God made man in His own image, He blessed him, told him to subdue the earth, and gave him dominion over the earth.

Dominion means to have sovereign power or all power within the domain that God had placed man. I want you to pay close attention to Gen. 1:28: “He told them [Adam and Eve, man and woman] to subdue it and have dominion over every living thing that moves.” Subdue means to put down, to humble or to conquer. Man had been given the power to conquer or to put down anything on the earth that moves and would manifest itself against him. God gave them the power to be victorious in the domain that God had given him.

Now, in chapter 3 of Genesis, the serpent [one of the living things that moves] approaches Eve with words of temptation, words designed to put a wedge between her and God. She had the power to subdue, to put down the words of the serpent, to conquer the temptation set before her, but she chose to yield to the wiles of the devil. She allowed the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life to lure her into a state of sin. Gen. 3:6 says: “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food [lust of the flesh], and that it was pleasant to the eyes [lust of the eye] and a tree to be desired to

make one wise [the pride of life], she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”

The first Adam failed the test, but it did not surprise God or catch Him off guard. He had a plan because He knows the end from the beginning. God put man out of the garden, put him out of the domain that he had created for him. Man lost his dominion and his power to subdue. But most importantly, he lost his relationship with God. He lost his birthright, if you will, and just like Esau, he sold it for something to eat. He, like Esau, in God’s eyes, despised his birthright (see Gen. 25:34). Esau lost his birthright to the supplanter Jacob. Adam lost his birthright (dominion) to the supplanter Satan who used the serpent to deceive Adam and Eve.

Satan now has dominion. He is the prince of the power of the air. He has power to deceive but he deceives only those that cannot or will not resist him. He uses animals or men who are not willing to resist the wiles of the devil. The Bible says in James 4:7: “Submit yourselves therefore to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”

Have you ever noticed that people worship calves, elephants, snakes, water buffalo, cows, etc.? Satan uses what he can, when he can, for what he plans. Do not let Satan use you!

Mankind is in a dilemma: no relationship with God, no power, no dominion, no way to get right with God, and no way to re-establish fellowship with Him.

Oh, but I’m so glad that God had a plan to take from the devil what he had stolen from the first Adam. God’s plan was wrapped up in His Son, in flesh. He sent His Son down through 42 generations, to be born of a virgin, walk among sinners and yet be

sinless, to die for our sins. He was the second Adam who came to reverse what the first Adam did.

Roman 3:13-17 says:

For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.

Jesus came to restore our relationship with God. He came to pay the penalty for our transgressions.

Rom. 3:23: "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

Rom. 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

Rom. 5:8. "But God commended His love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Rom. 5:6: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

Rom. 10:8-9: “But what saith it? The word is neigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

Jesus then brings us the power to be disciples (Matt. 28).

Discipleship

Matthew 28:19

“Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit:”

Disciple comes from the Latin word *discipulus*, meaning a special student and from the Greek word *matheteuo* meaning to be a disciple of one, to follow precepts and teachings of one.

So a disciple is a student or one being taught.

Vines *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*: A disciple is not only a student or pupil but an adherent; hence they are spoken of as imitators of their teacher.

In Mark, Jesus is the basis for and the pattern of discipleship

1. His death is the salvific ransom.

Mark 10:45: “For even the son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

2. The covenant making sacrifice.

Mar. 10:42: “But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise Lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them.”

3. The index of commitment for his disciples.

Mar. 18:34: “And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.”

4. And the servant pattern that they are to follow.

Mar. 10:43-45: “But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Behind the command to make disciples, there is the thought that one becomes a disciple of Jesus only on the basis of a call that leads to discipleship.

Let's look at some Scriptures.

Matt. 4:21-22: “And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.”

Isa. 55:1: “Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”

A disciple has to have a thirst for the Lord and a thirst for His Word.

Waters represent the word of God.

Everything the Lord has for his disciples is free.

Wine represents the Spirit of God that he freely gives.

The milk represents the Word.

John 7:37-39: “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.”

Matt. 16:24: “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”

The call requires self-denial and sacrifice

Matt. 11:28: “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

But it provides rest in the midst of it all.

Matt. 8:18-23 says:

Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side. And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nest; but the son of man hath not where to lay his head. And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, follow me; let the dead bury their dead.

To follow Christ requires commitment.

APPENDIX C.
PRE-TEST/POST-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE

Discipleship Pre-Test and Post-Test

1. All Christian are called to be disciples.
 - a. Agree
 - b. Strongly agree
 - c. Not sure
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
2. You must be a minister of Christ to be a disciple of Christ.
 - a. Agree
 - b. Strongly agree
 - c. Not sure
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
3. You must be seminary trained or have some professional theological training to be a disciple.
 - a. Agree
 - b. Strongly agree
 - c. Not sure
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
4. The pastor or a licensed minister is the only one that can train a disciple.
 - a. Agree
 - b. Strongly agree
 - c. Not sure
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
5. When Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world and make disciples..." He was speaking only to the disciples who walked with him during his earthly ministry.
 - a. Agree
 - b. Strongly agree
 - c. Not sure
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
6. Conversion is the central element in discipleship.

- a. Agree
 - b. Strongly agree
 - c. Not sure
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
7. You can only be a good disciple by being a good steward.
- a. Agree
 - b. Strongly agree
 - c. Not sure
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
8. Good stewardship only deals with being faithful in our monetary giving, i.e., tithes and offering.
- a. Agree
 - b. Strongly agree
 - c. Not sure
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
9. Discipleship can only be accomplished during the times you are witnessing to others.
- a. Agree
 - b. Strongly agree
 - c. Not sure
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
10. Stewardship and evangelism are both mandatory components of discipleship.
- a. Agree
 - b. Strongly agree
 - c. Not sure
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
11. Discipleship and church membership are the same.
- a. Agree
 - b. Strongly agree
 - c. Not sure
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree

12. If you do not love your mother and father more than Jesus you are not worthy to be a disciple.
 - a. Agree
 - b. Strongly agree
 - c. Not sure
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
13. Three necessities for becoming a disciple are self-denial, picking up your cross daily, and following Christ.
 - a. Agree
 - b. Strongly agree
 - c. Not sure
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
14. You have to obey Christ in everything in order to be a disciple of Christ.
 - a. Agree
 - b. Strongly agree
 - c. Not sure
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
15. Disciples are born, not made.
 - a. Agree
 - b. Strongly agree
 - c. Not sure
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
16. A disciple should know the Bible well enough, through study, to fight temptation and to resist the philosophies of the world.
 - a. Agree
 - b. Strongly agree
 - c. Not sure
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree

17. A disciple is obedient to the commands of Christ because they love him.

- a. Agree
- b. Strongly agree
- c. Not sure
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

18. A disciple should bear fruit.

- a. Agree
- b. Strongly agree
- c. Not sure
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

19. A fruit-bearing disciple glorifies God.

- a. Agree
- b. Strongly agree
- c. Not sure
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

20. Love is the motivation behind discipleship.

- a. Agree
- b. Strongly agree
- c. Not sure
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

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